

**The Centrality of the Margins:
The political economy of conflict and
development in borderlands**

Working Paper 2

**‘Borderlands, Brokers and
Peacebuilding: War to Peace
Transitions Viewed from the
Margins’**

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About the 'Borderlands, Brokers and Peacebuilding' project

This project aims to generate a better understanding of contested war to peace transitions in Nepal and Sri Lanka with a view to improving statebuilding and peacebuilding interventions in post-war contexts in South Asia and beyond.

Its originality lies in an approach that takes the putative margins of the state as the primary vantage point for understanding and explaining the political and economic dynamics of 'post war' transition.

By so doing it inverts the top down, centrist orientation commonly applied to studies of (and policy responses to) post-war statebuilding and reconstruction.

More information about the project is available at our website: <http://borderlandsasia.org/>

Access an illustrated essay 'Living on the Margins', based on this research here:
<http://borderlandsasia.org/living-on-the-margins>

Introduction

Global trends in the reduction of armed conflict and poverty have been broadly positive, though geographically uneven. However, success at the national level masks sub-national ‘black spots’ of protracted conflict and extreme poverty. Borderland regions are frequently such black spots. Subnational conflicts with strong trans-border dimensions are the most widespread, enduring and deadly forms of conflict in South and Southeast Asia, affecting half the countries of that region. In otherwise stable states, that are ostensibly ‘at peace’, borderland regions may be chronically violent places, with homicide rates and human rights abuses higher than in many war zones. These marginal spaces are also frequently zones of extreme and chronic poverty, where livelihoods depend upon the informal, illicit or criminal economies and the imprint of the state is weak or fitful. These regions seem to be largely immune to development successes celebrated at the national and international levels. As the 2011 World Development Report notes, fragile and conflict affected states experience ‘repeated and interlinked violence across borders’ and that ‘excessive focus on assistance to the individual nation state is mismatched with the challenges of transnational and cyclical violence’.

This paper explores the implications of a borderlands perspective by addressing two research questions:

- How can research on borderlands help illuminate understanding of statebuilding, violent contestation and development?
- What are the analytical and policy implications of a borderlands perspective for agencies engaged in development, stabilisation and peacebuilding?

It builds upon three related propositions: First, borderlands and frontier regions are frequently central to the dynamics of conflict, statebuilding and development. Second, policy makers tend to view borderlands as marginal, partly because their state-centric analytical frameworks and ways of working, and partly because of the failure of border studies scholars to translate a ‘borderland perspective’ into operationalizable policies. Third, taking borderlands seriously would challenge mainstream approaches and necessitate significant changes to development and peacebuilding policy/practice.

In a background section key terms are defined including borderlands, borders and frontiers, and the political economy approach to borderlands adopted in this paper is explained. Section two addresses the first research question, drawing upon existing borderlands research to show how this body of work

generates novel insights on a) violent conflict b) statebuilding c) development. In the penultimate section, some of the implications for policy and practice will be outlined, followed in the final section with a set of conclusions.¹

Rethinking policy narratives and ‘borderland blindness’

Development policy makers, it is argued in this paper, tend to suffer from ‘borderland blindness’. Because the nation state remains the central unit of analysis and intervention, there is a policy gap when it comes to questions of borders and borderlands. The social sciences developed in parallel to the emergence of modern western states, and grew up in awe of the state (van Schendel, 2005). Methodological nationalism is the norm, and the default position is to accept a world of fixity, stasis and boundedness. Development donors, like social scientists, tend to see the world in statist terms. Donors’ mental maps and consequently their starting assumptions are shaped by the ‘national order of things’. This is most evident with bilateral donors who are representatives of particular states and whose policies are formulated in the context of state-to-state relations. Partnerships between donors and recipient governments stand at the heart of development policy and practice. It is usually only in the context of humanitarian or disaster programming that such development principles are waived in favour of working with non state, or even anti state actors. It would be surprising therefore if development donors, who’s primary point of contact with a country is with state officials, usually in the capital city, did not absorb, to some extent, the world views, narratives and biases of the central government. The top down, high modern, centrist tendencies of state planning has been highlighted by Scott (1998) and others, and though this perspective perhaps overstates the coherence and hegemony of states (Murray Li, 2007; Mitchell, 1991; Sharma and Gupta, 2005) national officials in most cases do not begin from the perspective of the border region itself, but rather make proposals that always negotiate national interests.

This bias is reinforced by the way the development industry organises itself, including the division of the world into country teams, the national planning and budgeting processes, the location of country

¹ This paper is based upon a report prepared for the World Bank GPSURR. I would like to thank Anton Baare for steering this process and providing feedback on the paper.

offices in capital cities and so forth. The prioritization of relationships with central government officials, the clustering of international personnel in the capital, communication in English or national languages, the dependence on non vernacular media for information, the increased focus on security procedures and bunkering in conflicted environments (Duffield, 2013), all contribute to capital city biases and a filtering out of borderland perspectives.

Institutional incentives reinforce these biases. For example the prioritization of relationships with the state may encourage a reluctance to raise contentious conflict related issues, which the domestic government frames as an internal domestic concern (Parks et al, 2013). Disbursement pressures may work against the need to release funding more slowly, calibrated to local conflict dynamics. A low tolerance of security-related risks may prevent field visits to unruly borderlands. And bias toward the formal and licit economies, contributes to a lack of understanding and willingness to engage with illicit or illegal borderland economies.

This borderland blindness is compounded by the absence of robust, and reliable data on borderlands. Data sets and strategies of social inquiry are bound to the nation state. Statistics are largely based on national, aggregated data sets. Subnational and transnational data on conflict for example is extremely rare with the exception of the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) which records violence spatially and temporally. There is an underreporting or misreporting of subnational conflicts (Parks et al, 2013).²

A political economy approach to borderlands

We adopt here a political economy approach to studying borders and borderlands, which is based upon three analytical pillars (see Fig One). The first involves thinking about *power*. Political economy approaches foreground material interests and power relations, mediated by formal and informal institutions. This body of work, which heavily influences the 2011 World Development Report, stresses the need to analyse the state as an empirical reality rather than an ideal type model, to focus on the political settlements and coalitions that underpin the formal structures of the state and to avoid the

² One example of robust subnational analysis of security is the data compiled in Afghanistan by the Afghan NGO Security Office (ANSO), however this does not extend to data on transnational incidents and patterns of violence.

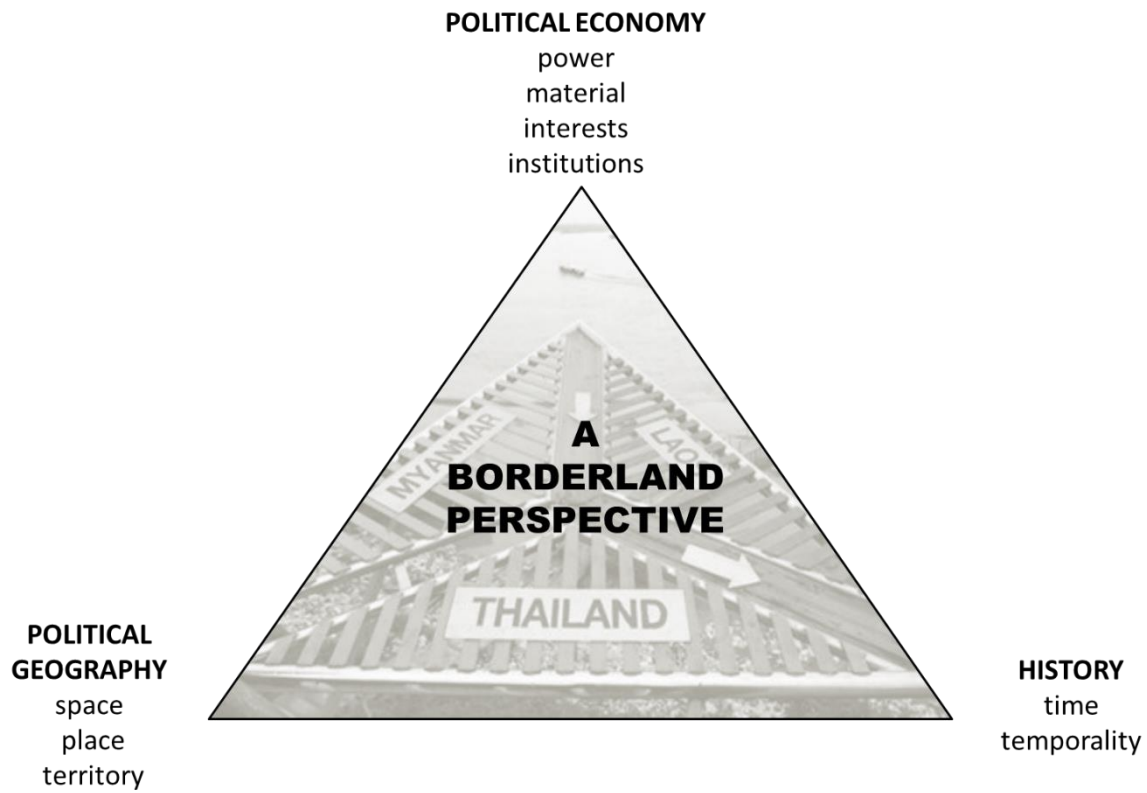
dualistic thinking which produces simplistic binaries between state and non-state, public and private, licit and illicit (cf Abrams, 1989; Di John and Putzel, 2009; North et al, 2012). Though this literature usefully deconstructs the state, it has for the most part been blind to the spatial and territorial dynamics of elite negotiations and rent sharing agreements. Statebuilding is understood as the diffusion of power outwards from centre to periphery and borderlands are conceptualized as unruly spaces needing to be incorporated and pacified.

The second pillar involves thinking about *space*, and in doing so, seeks to go beyond state centrism (Brenner, 1999) and methodological nationalism. Geography rather than the nation state may be the most appropriate framing device for analysis. There is a need to think beyond and below the state and also to appreciate how flows of people and commodities across space, unsettle the orderliness of states. The 2009 World Development Report exemplifies the spatial turn in development thinking. From this perspective borderlands are treated as ‘lagging regions’, which need to be integrated through improved infrastructure, better connectivity and investment in people. However, questions of power and history are largely avoided, ignoring the fact that borderlands are political and social spaces as well as economic spaces.

The third pillar involves thinking with and about *time* and history. This means moving beyond teleological narratives. Processes of change in the borderlands are rarely smooth and linear, but discontinuous, involving moments of rupture or punctuated equilibrium (Cramer and Goodhand, 2002). Institutions and processes of territorialisation are the product of particular historical moments and relations, which means thinking more explicitly about the historicity of territory and the territorialisation of history (Poultansas, cited in Watts, 2004). Borderlands are exemplars of the temporal hybridity of institutions, with the sedimentation of new institutions on top of older ones (Nugent, 2002; Sahlens, 1988).

Therefore borderlands are a particularly interesting vantage point to study processes of conflict, statebuilding and development. They are places of extreme institutional hybridity and illustrative of the twilight nature of institutions, in which private actors assume public functions, where the boundaries between the external and internal are blurred (Lund, 2006). Where the means of coercion are diffuse, and no one actor has a monopoly of legitimacy or the means of resource extraction or taxation, then the role of brokers becomes key. Borderland brokers play a crucial role in mediating between different scales, jurisdictions and policy domains, and they exploit the gaps or synapses

between national and local, public and private, centre and periphery, formal and informal (Goodhand, 2012; Roitman, 2005; Wolfe, 1956).



Defining Key Terms

Borders and boundaries

Borders perform various functions -- at their most basic they divide friend from foe, the familiar here from the unfamiliar there. First and foremost, borders are about power – they territorialize difference, and difference is used to assert control over space (Popescu, 2011).³ We live spatially ordered lives, within a nested hierarchy of territorial borders – the neighbourhood, city, county, region, and state (*ibid*). We also live in a world of invisible boundaries, which as Migdal (2004) notes, we learn to read, navigate and negotiate through ‘mental maps’ and ‘checkpoints’. Learning to read boundaries and not inadvertently step on them may be crucial – for the inhabitants of Karachi, or wartime eastern Sri Lanka, it is literally a matter of life and death.

Therefore we need to differentiate between borders as territorial lines on the edges of states, which are concrete and visible, and boundaries that symbolic. Though most borders are physical and symbolic at the same time, frequently territorial boundaries – particularly those demarking the edges of states -- and social boundaries do not coincide. Borders can be seen both as *institutions*, underpinned by sets of interests and power relations, and as *mentalities*, bolstered by particular worldviews and ideologies.

Borders are not so much a line as a relation and they epitomize contradictory forces – they are something that simultaneously divides and connects, a source of security, a barrier that protects and a site of friction and conflict. As Charles Tilly (2009) argues, boundary activation is central to the dynamics of collective violence. Mobilizing around certain forms of identity, making particular boundaries more salient than others, is something conflict entrepreneurs are highly attuned to. Central to processes of conflict management and de-escalation is brokerage – the transgression of, or mediation across boundaries, thus connecting different social and political fields. Brokerage may involve the purposive blurring or softening of boundaries as for instance in efforts to manage or mediate violent conflict. Or it may involve opportunistic arbitrage, exploiting the opportunities that boundaries provide in the form of price differences or relative scarcities. Differences across boundaries create a gradient and the higher the gradient, the higher the risks and possible pays offs for brokers.

³ Most of the world’s territorial boundaries were laid down between 1870 and 1925 and most of these were drawn by British and French imperial power alone (Harvey, 2011: 208).

Frontiers and borderlands

This paper aims to combine and reconcile two different vocabularies on the margins of the state - borderlands and frontiers (Korf & Raeymaekers, 2013). Borderlands are classically understood as zones straddling an international border, whilst frontiers are more fuzzy political spaces, marking zones of transition between different centres of power and regulation. Both are liminal spaces of cultural overlap and hybridity.

Frontiers are fault lines, spaces of encounter and transition between different geographies of settlement, political organisation and economic surplus generation.⁴ Frontiers can also be seen as ideological projects, spaces where state power is territorialized and with specific characteristics of violence and disorder. It is frequently assumed that frontiers are swallowed up in statebuilding processes that turn jagged edges or zones of transition into sharply inscribed international borders. Therefore, whilst empires thrive on fluctuating frontiers, nation states can only survive with tightly demarcated borders. However in practice the legacy of empires and their frontier zones and cities lives on beneath the mosaic of nation states (O'Dowd, 2012: 159). In many of today's borderlands there are traces of earlier frontier dynamics. Conversely in the case of Israel there has been a shift from borders to frontiers, according to Weizman (2002). After the expansion of its borders following the 1967 war, these borders have been dissolved and transformed from being fixed fortified lines laid out on the edges of the state's territory, to scattered and fragmented inner frontiers.

Borderlands as already noted, are classically understood as regions that straddle an international border. The presence of the borderline generates forms of adaptation – 'border effects' – politically, economically, socially which gives the borderland its unique character. As Baud and Van Schendel (1996) note, the borderland needs to be studied as a transborder zone, a geographical unit linking two or more state margins.

Borderlands research: the state of the art

⁴ Frontiers can be further differentiated between advancing, *tidal* frontiers e.g. the Tunesian American frontier and the *interstitial* frontiers, the liminal spaces located between consolidating states popularized by Kopytoff (1987).

Borderlands and violence

There is an accumulated body of research which shows that globally there has been an historical decline of war – of both the inter state and intra state varieties (Goldstein, 2011; Human Security Centre, 2010, Morris, 2014; Pinker, 2011). However, celebratory accounts of a more ‘war averse’ world should be treated with caution. First, there are problems with data and coding -- with the exception of ACLED, most data collected is aggregated at the national level and fails to capture or quantify violence at the subnational level. Second, there remain persistent trouble spots, and some of the longest running conflicts are those linked to regional conflict systems – i.e. bad neighbourhoods in which conflicts have spillover and diffusion effects, linking one neuralgia point to another (Pugh & Cooper, 2004) – classic examples being the Horn of Africa, the Central African Great Lakes conflict system and the current regionalized civil war in Iraq and Syria. If one maps levels of violence within these conflict systems, they frequently tend to be clustered around borderland regions. Furthermore, there remain clusters of fragility even in relatively strong, middle income countries (World Bank, 2012). In South and Southeast Asia, for instance, more than half the countries of this region are affected by subnational conflicts that have a transnational dimension. Third, although more wars are coming to an end, this does not mean that post war countries are necessarily peaceful. Many countries at peace continue to experience high levels of social and criminal violence, and frequently this violence is also clustered around borderland regions. For example, the region on the Guatemala-Honduras border has one of the highest murder rates in the world, whilst Ciudad Juarez on the US-Mexico border has until recently had a higher homicide rate than most war zones (UNODC, 2011)

Violent histories

State formation has historically been a violent process -- as Charles Tilly (1990) reminds us, this violence played a foundational role in the emergence of modern states. Frontier regions were often central to these processes of war making and state making. Men of violence on the fringes of emerging states, whose banditry and challenges to power and authority at the centre, became a catalyst for state expansion into its frontier regions (Gallant, 1999). Expanding empires deployed strategies of

exemplary violence and indirect rule to pacify unruly peripheries. War making was exported to the fringes of empire. Frontiers were the outposts of military power and authority.⁵

Border delineation itself is frequently the outcome or the cause of violent conflict – the most intense episodes of border drawing in the twentieth century followed the end of the first and second world wars and the break up the Soviet Union.⁶ War making forges strong affective ties and a commitment to shared borders, as for example in the de-colonisation struggles after World War Two. There are few cases of partition or secession that have not been extremely violent. And border creation may leave baleful legacies, the most evident and deadly being in the Middle East, but there are estimated to be over 150 border disputes in the world today.⁷

Post-colonial states inherited and deployed many of the coercive strategies of their imperial predecessors – following a trajectory of coercion intensive statebuilding, a reliance on despotic rather than infrastructural forms of power (Mann, 1984; Tilly, 1990). This was largely a function of state weakness, and as Herbst (2000) notes, in Africa, unconsolidated states were unable to exert control over inhospitable, sparsely populated borderland regions. Durable conditions of topography and social structure have long constrained states in Africa, and James Scott (2009) makes a similar point about the resistance of the upland hill tribes in Southeast Asia to the civilizational project of expanding low land states.

Many states failed to concentrate the means of violence, and in fact far from aspiring to be monopolists, they maintained stability by brokering or negotiating ‘violence rights’ between a plurality of violence wielders (Ahram, 2011). Barkey (2008) for instance shows how the Ottomans in the nineteenth century extended their rule through complex brokering arrangements with local powerholders on the empire’s periphery. Whilst there is no necessary and straightforward relationship between dispersion of the means of violence and the outbreak of violent conflict – as North et al (2009) argue, many limited access orders (LAOs) are relatively stable because of inclusive political

⁵ In the nineteenth century, on today’s Afghan-Pakistan borderlands, the British deployed a brutal policy of ‘butcher and bolt’ to punish and pacify the tribes, which then evolved into the Sandeman system of tribal policing in the early twentieth century. The post-colonial Pakistani state inherited a borderland that was never fully incorporated into the central state, subject to differing laws and administrative structures, and inhabited by borderland groups with conflicting loyalties and a strong insurrectionary tradition (Marsden and Hopkins, 2012).

⁶ The UN originally comprised 51 member states but now boasts 192 members.

⁷ CIA The World FactBook

settlements and rent sharing agreements – arguably in borderlands, it is more difficult for central state elites to sustain enduring political settlements, where there are a plurality of violence wielders and politico-military networks that have a cross border orientation. The stakes are much higher in these borderland zones because the state’s ability to control the opening/closing of the border is an essential foundation for the construction of LAOs (Meehan, 2014). It is only through the creation of a territorially enclosed state that the incentive for non state actors to cooperate with the centre is likely to be strong enough to generate enduring political coalitions (ibid).

Clearly not all borderlands are violent or troublesome. Many are well integrated and prosperous, as for instance the US-Canadian borderlands and the internal borderlands of Europe. In late developing states, many borderlands remain poor but passive. Furthermore the idea that borderlands have a structural propensity to become hotbeds of terrorism and violent criminality is not born out by empirical evidence. Terrorists do not gravitate to anarchic borderlands – they need a level of stability that functioning states can provide including access to banking facilities, businesses and communications. This is why international terrorists preferred to locate themselves in Kenya rather than Somalia and Pakistan rather than Afghanistan. Similarly, although it is true that borderlands have a comparative advantage in illegality, this does not mean that criminal economies are inherently violent. Instability and unpredictable violence are bad for business. In fact external policies may be a key vector of violence – liberal peacebuilding, the wars on terror and drugs, associated with the securitization and militarization of borders, play a role in inflaming and catalysing cycles of violence in border regions.

Violence in war time

With the outbreak of war, borderland regions frequently become the epicentres of conflict. In situations of asymmetric conflict between a central government and non state insurgents, borderlands become a strategic resource, a place of sanctuary for rebel groups. Cross border safe havens, and refugee warrior communities provide a base or springboard for rebel incursions. States are to some extent caged by sovereignty and so repertoires of violence shift as governments seek to undermine rebels by deploying surrogate forces at, or across the border (Ron, 2003). The counterinsurgency strategy of the Burmese state for instance has involved the widespread creation of militias in order to fracture and erode the

capacity of the rebel groups in the borderlands. Similarly the Pakistani state (primarily its military and intelligence arms) have deployed asymmetric warfare to undermine Indian control in Kashmir.

Repertoires and patterns of violence are also shaped by the types and geographical distribution of resources that are mobilized by warring groups. Diffuse, lootable resources, located on the periphery of the state – such as drugs – can provide the tax base for rebel groups, whilst point resources like oil and minerals that are centrally located, are easier for the state to monopolize (Le Billon, 2001). Political ecology approaches draw out the convoluted relationships between conflict, resources, territory and governance. Michael Watts (2004) for example examines the impacts of petro-capitalism on Nigeria's governance, arguing that oil has become the central 'idiom' of Nigerian politics. However, its effects on governance are uneven and context specific, producing different kinds of governable (or ungovernable) spaces.⁸

Insurgency and counter insurgency may lead to the proliferation of violence specialists, and to processes of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation. Regional conflict systems develop, connecting different borderland regions such as the Kashmir, FATA and the Ferghana valley. There may be strong continuities between the wartime and peacetime political economy. A history of regional interference and meddling may impede the forging of a new and stable, domestically brokered political settlement.

Relations between centre and periphery may be recalibrated as borderlands, particularly frontier cities, become vibrant political and economic centres. Borderland groups may advance their position in wartime, which is manifest in stronger bargaining power in the post war settlement, as for example has been the case with the minorities in post 2002 Afghanistan.

In protracted conflict, new internal borders are drawn and policed, space is privatized as non state actors seek to establish control over territory, resources and populations. Traveling from the metropolitan centre to the periphery may involve crossing multiple (un)governable spaces (Watts, 2004). Violence is frequently at its most intense and indiscriminate in the grey areas between these

⁸ Watts identifies three different types of spaces – a space of nationalism, a space of indigeneity and a space of chieftainship

different regulatory regimes, where the loyalty of populations is most in doubt (Goodhand et al, 2000; Kalyvas, 2006; Korf et al, 2010).

Post war violence

States respond to unruly and strategically important border areas with more troops and police. The physical landscape is dominated by military structures and symbols -- the army and police barracks, the guard towers, check posts and barbed wire fences. In many borderlands the Leviathan is a stranger, as the frontier is populated with military personnel from outside the region, turning the border strip into a security buffer zone (Eilenberg, 2014). Counter insurgency and state territorialisation go hand in hand. Loyal groups may be moved in to dilute the local population – the Sinhala peasantry for example acted as the frontiersmen of the Sri Lankan state in the land colonisation schemes of the Tamil dominated north and east in the post-independence era (Thangarajah, 2002). International peacekeeping missions may inadvertently destabilize fragile borderland regions; either by getting drawn into military confrontations, or funnelling resources that distort the local political marketplace (de Waal, 2009). However, the level of borderland securitization varies according to how threats are identified and defined. In marginal peripheries the state presence may be limited, and policing functions are delegated to local defence forces such as the ‘arrow boys’ on the western borderlands of South Sudan (Schomerus & de Vrie, 2014).

As explored further below, processes of development in the borderlands may themselves be extremely violent, involving continued military surveillance, human rights abuses, land grabs and forced displacement. Wartime violence frequently mutates into other forms of everyday, symbolic or structural violence, though its salience, intensity and scale varies according to the nature of the post war settlement (Bougious, 2004; Surhke & Berdhal, 2011). Traces of violence linger on in the post war institutions and in the public memory.

Borderlands and the state

The nation state is the basis for the division of political space. The bundling of state, nation, sovereignty and territory is a defining feature of the modern state system. Territory provides a locus for the exercise of political authority and the state border defines political belonging (Sack, 1986). For

the nation state concept to take root, state rulers needed to develop practices to instil a sense of national identity – the creation of myths and symbols, state discourses and education – characterized by Newman and Paissi (1998) as a processes of territorial socialisation. Nationalism builds an intimate connection between people and territory. It needs to give people a stake in the territorial state – something that is important enough for them to be willing to kill and die for. The construction of out-groups, and the margin is central to the dynamic of building-in group solidarity and national sensibilities (Das and Poole, 2004). Borders are where the state's existential insecurities may be most acute, and are frequently sites for the theatrical display and performance of state sovereignty. Discourses of purification and ultra-nationalism may be more evident at the border than in the centre – in Sri Lanka for example, Sinhalese nationalism emerged from the periphery, as a counter elite political movement, that attacked the mainstream parties dominated by an Anglicized metropolitan elite (Rampton, 2012; Uyangoda, 2003).

Yet state-discourses cannot be taken at face value. The tendency to treat states as natural entities, part of the normative order of things, is to fall into the 'territorial trap' (Agnew, 1994) – namely the 'geographic assumptions' that; first, the state wields sovereignty over its entire territorial jurisdiction; second, that the 'domestic' and 'international' spheres can be clearly delineated; and third that the state is the 'container' of society and there is a straightforward congruence between the territorial boundaries of the state and group identity. In practice, many states in the developing world diverge from the Weberian ideal. Exclusive power over territory and subjects, a monopoly over the means of coercion, taxation and legitimacy/representation, may remain an aspiration.

Insights derived from the political economy and anthropology of the state literatures, highlight the need to study states as they actually exist, rather than the extent to which they conform to, or diverge from, an ideal type Weberian model. These perspectives focus attention on:

- The power relations, material interests and negotiation processes that shape and underpin formal state structures. How the state frequently contains its own 'alter ego' in the form of embedded networks -- 'shadow states' (Reno, 1995) or 'rhizome states' (Bayart, 1993) -- and how sovereignty is worked out, negotiated or shared where there is a plurality of powerholders. Sovereignty may be fragmented or segmented (Migdal, 2004b).

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- The (primary and secondary) political settlements that shape the division of rents and access to the means of violence and how these influence the stability of the state (North et al, 2009; Khan, 1995; Di John & Putzel, 2009; Parks and Cole, 2010). States may have uneven control over their territory and political order is maintained through brokering arrangements, in which the state is one political institution amongst many;
 - The blurring of simplistic state-non state, public and private binaries, in recognition of the hybridity or twilight nature of governance (Lund, 2006; Meagher, 2012; MacGinty, 2010; Raeymaekers, 2013);
 - The uneven and contested processes of territorialisation within the borders of the state. How states are frequently forced to work with the grain of existing structures of authority and local economies in the borderworld (Boone, 2003; Meehan, 2014; Nugent, 2002);
 - The everyday practices and subjectivities of borderland groups and individuals in their daily encounters with the state (Das and Poole, 2004; Sharma & Gupta, 2005; Roitmann, 2005);
 - How the assemblages of transnational governance influence domestic political settlements, the structure of the economy, the policy environment and consequently the state's authority and capacity to rule at the border (Barnett & Zuercher, 2009; Chandler, 2010; Chalfin, 2012; Duffield, 2001, 2007; Heathershaw, 2008; Murray-Li, 2007). Sovereignty between nations is less a right than a responsibility; it is contingent, and provisional, dependent on the extent to which a state meets external measures of 'good governance' (Chandler, 2010; Eldon, 2009). An increasingly internationalized political economy poses new challenges to familiar forms of state spatialization (Ferguson & Gupta, 2002: 982).

In borderlands, the complex political topography and institutional patchiness of 'the state' come out in sharpest relief. In studying borderlands as 'extreme sites', they provide a lens for 'reading the state at its limits' (Harris 2009: 5). A multitude of state agents cluster around the border, including different levels of government and different arms of government – from customs systems, border police officers, border guard military units, health inspectors and so forth. Neo-liberal restructuring of the state has further pluralized institutional arrangements at the border (Chalfin, 2012; Roitman, 2005).

Rather than seeing state building as the steady diffusion of power outwards from the centre to the periphery, flowing through the bureaucratic and hierarchical structures of the state, we see a more contested oscillation of power backwards and forwards between a complex assemblage of institutions and actors located at the centre and periphery. The margins are not just reflective of power relations at

the centre, but play a role in constituting or co-producing power relations and political settlements at the national level.

Borderlands are a space of encounter between different forms and logics of rule – between centre and periphery, and across the border. The horizontal reach of the state into outlying regions, varies in space and time, linked in turn to its vertical reach, manifest in shifting intensities and forms of state-society relations.⁹ The imprint of the state in its different borderlands is never uniform -- some borderlands are more valuable or more troublesome to the state than others. The state-borderland ‘conversation’ is shaped by the particular attributes of the borderlands including its population density, political leadership, development potential and geo-strategic importance (Boone, 2003). Different kinds of state-borderlands social contracts are forged, varying along a continuum from the coercive and imposed, to the collaborative and negotiated (Nugent, 2010). These processes are also shaped by institutions and events across the border. Successful statebuilding in one country may impede or actively sabotage the statebuilding strategies and borderland development of its neighbour. Uganda’s exploitation of the DRC’s eastern borderlands, and Pakistan’s meddling in Afghanistan are cases in point.

Borderlands may also be zones of legal pluralism and jurisdictional complexity. Borderlanders may draw tactically upon different legal codes – customary, religious or state-based – on both sides of the border. Borderland communities, with sources of belonging and loyalty, that transcend state boundaries¹⁰ are perceived as a threat to the homogenizing projects of states. Attempts by the state to incorporate the borderlands may be less about extending the rule of law than suspending it.

Borderlands, like the Ethiopian Ogaden, may be treated as a ‘state of exception’, subject to exemplary forms of violence and the population having few of the rights enjoyed by citizens living in the centre (Hagmann & Korf, 2011). Borderland regions may therefore suffer from a democratic deficit, as well as being economically marginal.

⁹ Ferguson & Gupta (2002) identify two principles that are key to state spatialization. First *verticality* (the state is ‘above’ society) and second *encompassment* (the state encompasses its localities).

¹⁰¹⁰ Van Schendel (2002) with reference to citizenship in post partition South Asia, writes about ‘proxy citizenship’ to refer to the ambiguous loyalties of Muslims in India or Hindus in Pakistan – citizenship was based on territorial location and proxy citizenship on religious community (p255)

Whilst borderlands may be sites of nationalist mobilisation they are also places of movement, fluidity and hybridity – they are both containers nationalism and conduits of transnationalism, unsettling the orderliness of states. A growing anthropological literature focuses on the subjectivities, agency and fluid identities of borderland communities, and how residents understand themselves in relation to broader notions of community and the state (Van Schendel, 2002; Donnan & Wilson, 1999). Though Scott (2009) conceptualises borderlands as non state or anti state spaces, others view the people and the state not as oppositions but as part of the same domain. Several studies of borderland groups show how borderland groups collude and cooperate with the state in order to tilt the border to their advantage; far from resisting the state they encourage its expansion into the margins (Nugent, 2002; Sahlens, 1988, Tagglicozza, 2005).

Borderlands and development

Capital, states and frontiers

Capitalism and borders are frequently seen as being in opposition. At the heart of this opposition is the tension between two different logics of power – one territorial and the other capitalist (Harvey, 2011). These two logics are not reducible to each other but are closely entwined (ibid: 205). Centrifugal economics, it is assumed, works against the centripetal, territorializing thrust of statebuilding. Open borders act as a brake on the state's ability to tax its citizens and mobilize resources. Similarly, borders are treated by neoclassical economics as a cost, acting as barriers to free trade, or the free flow of goods, labour and skills¹¹. Borders are where the inherently transnational expansionism of capitalism comes up against the conventional territorial delimitation of political community (Anderson, 2001). Yet capitalists need borders. States have provided the framework for the organization of stable large-scale wealth accumulation strategies. Borders have historically provided the protection for national capital from outside competition and a national market for consumption. Managed borders were essential to enable the generation of revenue for the state from tax collection. Late developmental states were successful, not because they had open borders and free trade – like the early

¹¹ And as Marx wrote, capital must 'strive to tear down every spatial barrier to intercourse ie to exchange and conquer the whole earth for its market'. Innovations throughout the history of capitalism have been driven by the need to overcome the friction of distance and speed up capital accumulation (Harvey, 2011: 158).

developers they selectively filtered the movement of commodities, financial flows and people across their borders, in order to protect the interests of emerging capitalist elites and to nurture nascent industries and productive capacities (Chang, 2005). In the era of globalisation, borders and capitalism continue to have a symbiotic relationship. Borders allow market actors to play states against states, cities and communities against cities and communities – markets exploit economic inequalities of people and goods in space and time (Popescu, 2011). Geographic differentiation is a necessary condition for capital accumulation to begin. This has become more the case not less, even though the friction of distance plays less of a constraining role on capital. As Harvey (2011: 161-2) notes, ‘highly mobile capital plays close attention to even slight differences in costs because these yield high profits’. And capitalist development is itself an engine for (re)producing difference – the industrial capitalist city can be understood as ‘a machine for the manufacturing and maintenance of distributional inequalities’, what Harvey characterizes as ‘territorial injustice’ (Harvey, 1973, cited in Soja, 2010: 49). Whilst in recent years there has been some convergence of incomes across countries, there have been widening income disparities within countries (World Bank, 2009). The global distribution of poverty has changed with most of the world’s poor now living in middle income countries and growing spatial inequalities within countries threaten social cohesion and stability. Households in countries like Indonesia and Sri Lanka located in more prosperous metropolitan areas have an average consumption almost 75% higher than that of similar households in lagging areas within the same country (*ibid*).

Frontier zones have long played an important role in the dynamics of capitalist development. The opening up of the American frontier and then the new colonial frontiers in Africa and Asia were central to processes of capital accumulation in the imperial centres. Frontier expansion frequently involved violent conquests and colonial occupation. And the violent dynamics of primitive accumulation continue in many of today’s frontier zones. Rather than withering away, frontiers wax and wane according to the shifting value of frontier resources in regional and international commodity markets (Eilenberg, 2014). For example, in Afghanistan, increased farm gate prices for opium pushed cultivation out into the marginal desert lands of the southwest (Mansfield, 2014). Spontaneous settlement of these areas by landless peasants, investment in irrigation, the construction of houses and

roads, together have exerted a gravitational pull on the state and its competitors (in the form of the Taliban), who in a dynamic familiar to many frontier regions, seek to control and tax these activities.¹²

Frontier regions and weakly regulated borderlands situated far from the gaze of the state may have a comparative advantage in illegibility and illegality. Such zones, like the Amazon basin or the eastern DRC lend themselves to adventure capitalism, and the capturing of windfall profits based on high risk-high return activities, such as illegal logging, coltan mining or drugs trafficking. Frontier zones constitute a resource for neighbouring states as well as global capital. The DRC for instance provides a zone of demographic expansion and resource extraction for the Ugandan and Rwandan states.

Rather than seeing these frontier zones as autarkic and marginal, they are highly connected into the global circuits of capital and exchange. Borderland communities and brokers learn to adapt to, manage and exploit this extreme extroversion – they act locally but think globally. In the absence of a mediating state, such brokers, literally ‘jump scales’ – for example the Sri Lankan Tamil businessman building hotels in Jaffna through diaspora funding, or the Kachin entrepreneur doing deals with Chinese financiers to run casinos in Burma’s north eastern borderlands.

But it is not only the illicit or grey economy that links the frontier zones with the metropolitan centres in the global north. This symbiotic relationship extends to the licit economy as well. As already highlighted, capitalism depends upon and exploits geographical and socio-economic difference. Frontier zones are sources of surplus populations, which can be imported to the core, or conversely they are cheap labour outlets for investment, which provide a short term answer to crises in the capitalist core. The borderlands of southern Africa have historically, and continue to, act as labour reserves for commercial farming, the service sector and industries in South Africa. Frontiers are regions of durable precariousness, where the bargaining power of labour is weak. Underemployment, unemployment and low standards of living in the sending country ensure a surplus pool of potential workers. As Coplan (2010: 58-59) notes in the cases of Lesotho and Mexico, male migrants cross the border, whilst wives and family members remain at ‘home’. In this way employers benefit from immigrant labour, whilst avoiding the costs of reproduction and maintenance which are born by the

¹² In a similar vein, Truett (2006) writing about history of the US-Mexico borderlands describes how the copper mines “remade a formerly isolated region at the ragged edges of states and markets into an industrial crossroads fed by circuits of capital, labor, and transnational collaboration that extended deep into both nations” (4).

source community. Therefore the economic pathologies of borderlands are more about adverse incorporation than the failure to integrate. Just as the EU requires cheap labour peripheries, so the US outsources production to the Mexican factories (*maquiladora*) clustered along the borderline.

Dynamics of borderlands and trade

Borders generate a ‘spatial discount’, or the opportunity for those who are buying, selling or employing, to derive profit by playing the difference between regulatory regimes on both sides of a border. Rents are created by difference. Borders are in this sense, less constraints, than fields of opportunity. These dynamics take place not just *in* the border but *because* of the border. The intensity of economic flows and relations may be greater across the border than with the metropolitan centre within the state. Smugglers violate the laws of the state in order to obey those of economics (Anderson, 2001). But this does not mean that smugglers are necessarily anti-state – in fact they are rarely revolutionaries. They have a symbiotic relationship with states and they collude with, and often actively collaborate with, state officials – the game is about outwitting rather than overthrowing the state.

Therefore borderlands have their own particular ecosystems, linked to their specific histories and geographies. But two factors are critical in structuring the dynamics of borderlands trade; first, the type and level of state presence at the border and second, the depth or degree of inequality at the border (Zartman, 2010). The Canadian-US border for instance is a ‘shallow’ border, whilst the US-Mexican has great depth and is a site of extreme inequalities; ‘The US-Mexican border is where the third world grates against the first and bleeds (Anzaldua, 1987:12). According to More (2011), ‘extreme borders’, characterized by great economic asymmetries exhibit particular pathologies – including securitization/militarization, high levels of violence, drugs and human trafficking. In other words there is a high ‘gradient’, and the more powerful state, rather than trying to promote convergence and integration, does the opposite and has the paradoxical effect of steepening the gradient further, which in turn increases the stakes, incentives and risk premium associated with crossing the border. Therefore border control is the business of the dominant partner, whilst border taxation is the business of the weaker (Coplan, 2010: 61).

In contexts where the authority and economy of the two bordering states are of equal weakness, the emphasis is on performance, gatekeeping and taxation. Therefore governments may show little

enthusiasm for investing in effective monitoring and evaluation of the border, which would basically kill off the ‘border business’.

For smugglers and state agents, the key is less about administering territory than controlling the corridors and choke points. For example Goma is a crucial node in the network of East African trading corridors (Brenton et al, 2011; Lamarque, 2014). On the Guatemala-Honduras border there are 15 formal crossing points but more than 100 informal ones. These ‘blind spots’ (*puntos ciegos*) are unofficial border crossings that the governments have little capacity to control (ICG, 2014).

The distinction between formal and informal trade, legal and illegal may be meaningless in the borderlands. Borders are a nexus between the combat, shadow and coping economies (Goodhand, 2005). For example the Afghan-Tajik border was a key crossing point for weapons and drugs during the war years. In the post war period, drugs along with a range of licit commodities such as cigarettes, precious stones, four wheel drives and food staples, continued to cross the boundary line, untaxed, but with the connivance of state officials on both sides of the border. Rents generated by the drug economy are invested in consumption, housing and infrastructure and consequently feed into and support the coping economy (Goodhand, 2012). Cross border interdependencies emerge where there are different fields of opportunity on each side. For example on the Goma-Gisenyi border, Goma as an unregulated, high-risk, high opportunity environment is where people do business. But the profits generated from this business tend to be invested on the other side of the border, where Congolese businessmen build their houses in the more secure and regulated Rwandese state space (Lamarque, 2014). As Caplon (2010: 62) notes in an insightful comparison of the Lesotho-South Africa and US-Mexico borderlands, ‘a kind ‘border culture’ develops as legal, logistical and even social problems are worked out cooperatively on site between officials of the two countries. Whilst on the one hand national government officials seek to maintain the fiction of the border as a legal boundary, local level officials find ways of coping with, and profiting from central government over-regulation (ibid).

Therefore the border constitutes a resource both for borderland populations and state officials. Government positions at the border, such as police chiefs and border guards are extremely lucrative and cost a lot of money to purchase. In order to recoup the initial outlay, officials have to extract as much as possible from the movement of commodities and people across the border.

Trading routes are often grafted onto long standing regional networks and connections that preceded statebuilding, as for example the Silk Route in Central Asia and the ancient trade routes crisscrossing

the Sahara (McDougall & Scheele, 2012). Border delineation, did not so much interrupt these regional networks of interdependence, as restructure them, leading to smuggling networks and semi-licit trade and new regional powers centres that were dependent on borders.¹³

Borderlands are defined not so much by barriers, as by movement, flux, and hybridity. Frontiers are ‘fugitive landscapes’ (Truett, 2006), places of influx and outflux. People historically moved to the frontiers to evade statebuilding projects, wars and persecution (Scott, 2009). Imperial powers and modern states settled the frontiers with loyal subjects who could secure and more productively develop the frontier. There is a persistent tension in frontier regions between the territorial pretensions of states and borderland populations who have hyphenated identities and whose livelihoods depend on movement and arbitrage.

Although states depend upon the movement of people and capital, this has to be managed and controlled. A striking example is the labour regime based around the asymmetrical border between Burma and Thailand. The Thai economy depends heavily on cheap Burmese labour, particularly in the construction and fishing industries – maintaining a semi-legal, and liminal workforce which can be returned to Burma at any point, provides a flexible and super cheap labour reserve, that works in conditions of slavery (Hodal et al, 2014).

Borderland development

As noted earlier, many frontier regions and borderlands were remote and sparsely populated and could not be profitably administered by the state. After being incorporated into expanding states they remained ‘lagging’ regions (Farole, 2013; World Bank, 2009). They suffer from endemic weaknesses common to borderlands including a failure to achieve economies of scale and wasteful duplication of investments, so-called border-induced deficits. They are often sites of chronic poverty, suffering from long term neglect and low levels of ‘geographic capital’ – a clustering of disadvantages including remoteness, poor infrastructure and services, weak institutions, sparse population, lack of resources,

¹³ Another example of the continuity of institutions and networks that subvert borders is the hawala system in South Asia, which has been crucial to the survival of licit and illicit businesses throughout the war years in Afghanistan and continues to be more important than the formal banking sector for borderland populations (Thompson, 2011).

challenging terrain. These regions constitute spatial poverty traps. Metropolitan centres, in contrast benefit from positive neighbourhood effects including agglomeration, connectivity and strong institutions (World Bank, 2013). Centripetal forces that reinforce concentration in core areas, lead in turn to greater in-country disparities.

In some borderlands, inequalities between lagging regions and other parts of the country, coincide with linguistic, ethnic or religious identities – and enduring horizontal inequalities became a potent rallying cry for political mobilisation, which in many contexts turned violent – separatist movements emerged in north east Sri Lanka, southern Thailand, the borderlands of Burma, Mindanao in the Philippines, the Uyghurs in Western China (Stewart, 2008).

Clearly not all borderland regions are poor, undeveloped and unruly. Some states have dealt productively with so-called lagging regions, through political inclusion and development. Italy for instance granted its disputed Tyrolean region, a considerable degree of political autonomy and a fiscal regime that allows the region to retain close to 90% of its levied taxes.

However, flawed or failed attempts by states to incorporate and develop borderlands are more common, particularly in the developing world.¹⁴ Securitized development may be deployed by states as an alternative to, or to obviate the need for political reforms to accommodate borderlanders' grievances. The Chinese government's economic development policies in Tibet, for example, are geared towards bringing about irreversible changes so as to undermine demands for independence. The building of infrastructure to overcome the friction of topography and distance is a case in point, of development initiatives being shaped by an underlying military and strategic logic. Similarly, the Sri Lankan government's reconstruction efforts in the north and east, following its military victory over the LTTE, were partly about blunting the secessionist impulse. Roads and other frontier infrastructure, including military camps and police barracks are physical expressions of the government's coercive re-territorialisation of a previously non-state or anti-state space (ICG, 2012).

¹⁴ One example is the Helmand Valley Authority implemented in southern Afghanistan, and funded by the US government, based on the model of the Tennessee Valley Authority. The attempt to sedentarize unruly Pashtuns and turn the deserts of Helmand into a food basket, absorbed huge amounts of money but failed to either bring development or security (Cullathar, 2002). The 'muscular teleology' powering this dream of modernization, did not survive its encounter with the reality of a fluid, conflictual and fiercely independent frontier zone.

In Burma, unlike Sri Lanka, its north-east frontier zones, including the teak forests of Shan state, are resource rich, but protracted conflict denied the state access to these areas. The signing of ceasefire agreements with insurgent groups in the early 1990s had the effect of the opening up of the borderlands. These agreements have unleashed a process of ‘ceasefire capitalism’ (Woods, 2011) involving an extension of the state’s presence into the borderlands, through development projects funded through Chinese capital and laundered drugs money (Meehan, 2011; Woods, 2011). The borderlands have been turned into productive spaces for pipelines, commercial agriculture and logging, the result of violent processes of primitive accumulation, enclosure and settlement. Similarly on the Malaysian-Indonesian borderlands, national discourses of sovereignty, security and agrarian expansion intersect. Counter-insurgency, border militarization and large-scale development in the form of palm oil monocropping are creating new frontiers of land control (Eilenberg, 2014; Hall, 2013; Peluso and Lund, 2011). Chinese-Malaysian entrepreneurs have been central to these processes, acting as brokers between the Malaysian state and borderland communities, first gaining a foothold in the border through their involvement in the illegal timber trade and then shifting to engagement in legal cross-border oil palm plantation development (Eilenberg, 2014).

Borderland cities and frontier towns

Borderlands, however are not simply the passive receptors of external development programmes. They can be understood less as residual, marginal places than active laboratories of political, social and economic change, in which there are emergent hybridized forms of development and political order. Though some borderlands are lagging regions, others are zones of rapid urbanisation and industrialisation. These places, in many ways exemplify the three drivers of changes identified in the 2009 World Development Report of agglomeration, migration and specialisation. The Marida-Katsina-Kano ‘development corridor’ on the Niger-Nigeria border, for example is one of the most densely populated areas in West Africa. The Nigeria side of the 1500 km common border contains four major cities and is an industrial centre. Frontier boomtowns that grow on two sides of the border have a catalytic role in regional development. Jalalabad-Peshawar and Herat-Mashad on the Afghan-Pakistan and Afghan-Iranian borders are two examples of rapid urbanisation and economic growth, each centre

feeding into the success of the other.¹⁵ These cities are spaces of cross border flows and engines of capital accumulation (Dobler, 2009; O'Dowd, 2012; Nugent, 2012). Licit and illicit activities are closely entwined in a relationship of co-production rather than competition. Labour markets in the two cities become increasingly connected, with the constant movement back and forth and families spreading economic and political risks by living on both sides of the border – for example an Afghan family may have a son who is employed in the Afghan National Army or police force, another stays on the farm to cultivate poppy, another finds labouring jobs in Peshawar, one may be fighting with the Taliban and some of the women in the family may be living in Peshawar there they can get better access to education and health care (Marsden & Hopkins, 2012; Mansfield, 2011). In the case of unequal borders the subaltern side towns act as labour entrepôts, and on the dominant side, towns act as transportation depots for arriving workers as well as mercantile centres (Coplan, 2010: 57).

Development in such contexts has little to do with national planning or international projects, and has everything to do with self-organized merchant communities – a phenomenon that bears resemblances to the long distance city based trading networks of the middle ages, and over time these merchant communities increasingly contributed to the public administration of the cities (Braudel, 2002). To what extent are the arbitrage economies in today's borderlands contributing to long-term development and poverty eradication? Boom towns frequently go bust – as Truett's (2006) compelling history of the US-Mexican borderlands shows, the ruins of earlier efforts to populate and profit from the frontier are scattered along the border in the form of abandoned cities, mines and homesteads. Today's rapidly urbanizing border regions bring their own forms of mal-development including violence, crime, the absence of planning, environmental and health costs and so forth.

Clearly there are profits to be made in boom towns, but where and how are the profits invested? For example, are drugs rents generated in the Afghan borderlands re-invested locally? Or are they recycled into the construction sector in Kabul or alternatively do they disappear into bank accounts in Dubai? Similarly if Congolese businessmen involved in cross border trade invest in real estate in Rwanda, how much benefit does Goma gain from the 'Chorachora' trade? More research is needed to look at the processes through which borderland entrepreneurs graduate from speculative, illicit or grey activities

¹⁵ Examples from the South Africa (Free State) – Lesotho border include Fouriesburg/Batha Buthe, Clocolan/Teyateyaneng and from the US-Mexico border Brownsville/Matamoros, El Paso-Santa Teresa/Ciudad Juarez (Coplan, 2010: 57).

into investment in the licit and productive economy. To what extent do the ‘Grand Barons’ of the Goma-Gisenyi border, or the cross border trading mafia in Peshawar constitute an emergent capitalist class? Raeymaekers (2010) and Goodhand (2012) point to a Tillyan trajectory in the eastern DRC and Afghan north eastern borderlands respectively, in which processes of violent accumulation lay the foundations for the emergence of new hybrid forms of authority and investments in public goods such as security and welfare. Yet, as Meagher (2012) argues, although political settlements based on neo-patrimonial arrangements may be stabilizing, this does not mean they are necessarily either legitimate or developmental.

In the age of globalisation, regionalisation and supra-national bodies, economic integration is frequently viewed as the optimal policy option for lagging borderlands. Policymakers point to success stories in the developed world, including for example the Canadian-US border region. The economies of Ontario and Michigan for example are highly interdependent and constitute part of one large economic region at the core of which are the cities of Detroit-Windsor and Sarnia-Port Huron. Ontario trades three times more with the rest of the world than with the rest of Canada. However, as explored further below, the costs and benefits of integration are never evenly distributed. The effects of NAFTA on the Mexican economy and specifically its borderlands have been extensively documented. On the one hand Mexico’s border regions grew real gross value added by 36%, more than three times faster than the average growth in other regions (Baylis et al 2009, cited in Farole, 2013: 3). At the same time it had a devastating impact on Mexican agriculture, increased rural urban gaps, creating the labour reserves for the maquiladoras on the border, and also the search for alternatives livelihoods in the drug economy.

In Burma, increased economic integration has had mixed developmental outcomes particularly for borderland populations. The tea industry in northern Shan State, for example, has been undermined by cheaper imports, whilst the remaining tea production has been increasingly monopolized by an alliance of the military, borderland brokers and cross border investors (Meehan, 2011).

In conclusion, the previous sections have provided an overview and synthesis of some of the research and writing on borderlands. It identified defining features of borderlands, and some of the variables that explain differing trajectories of change, that have led to different outcomes in relation to conflict, statebuilding and development. Table one provides a summary of some of the key points covered, which are divided according to Tilly’s (1990) trinity of capital, coercion and legitimacy:

Table One: Key features and determinates of change in borderlands

Coercion	Representation/legitimacy	Capital
History of violence/insurrectionary tradition	Political settlements – national and sub national – and the ‘fit’ between formal and informal power structures	Level of development in the borderland – urbanisation, industrialisation, population density, household incomes
State reliance on despotic power, exemplary violence	Stability/fragility of limited access orders and the continuity of brokers	Spatial inequalities – across the border (depth), and between centre-periphery
Plurality of violence wielders – democratization of ‘violence rights’	Vertical and horizontal reach of the state	Presence of horizontal inequalities
Trans-national military networks, base areas, refugee warrior communities	Distance and connectivity between centre and periphery	Level of economic integration across the border and between centre and periphery
Diffusion and spillover effects – regional conflict systems and neuralgia points	Level of state provision and services	Proportion of the economic activities that are licit/illicit/illegal
Militarized/securitized borders and borderscapes	Level of institutional and legal pluralism	Presence of border towns/twin cities
Counter insurgency policies, policing.	Access to justice	Fiscal capacity of the state in the border areas – customs and excise, income tax
Mutation of war time violence in social and criminal violence	Social contracts –continuum from imposed/coercive to negotiated/ consensual	State redistributive policies and investments in border areas
Presence/absence of international peacekeepers/peacebuilders	Level of political and social cohesion	
	Political voice and loyalties of borderland groups	

	Perceptions of state legitimacy and existence of alternative forms of legitimacy/representation	Extent to which flows of commodities/people are regulated at the border The level and spatial distribution of donor funding/programmes
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A borderland perspective means thinking carefully about changes within, and interconnections between, these three pillars, whilst still considering the underlying questions of power, space and time. Seeming advances in one sphere – such as economic development – should not be viewed in isolation from what is happening in other spheres. For instance investments in Sri Lanka’s peripheries may induce accelerated growth rates, and an extension of the state’s presence into formerly war torn areas. But with a lack of political reforms, a growing centralisation of power and a militarization of the north east, this form of ‘development’ may contribute to the emergence of renewed conflict. Therefore, a borderland perspective, should encourage a careful consideration of how the costs and benefits of particular policy interventions are spatially distributed.

A Typology of Borderlands

As the review above indicates, there has been a renaissance in the field of border studies. The growth of this field has broadly gone in two directions. First, the empirical study of individual borderlands, historically and in contemporary settings in Latin America (e.g. Martinez, 1994; Truett, 2006), Asia (e.g. Gellner, 2013; van Schendel, 2005b), Africa (e.g. Auwahy & Adeniyi, 1989; Feyissa & Hoehne, 2010; Nugent, 2002), the Middle East (e.g. Amir, 2011; Bornstein, 2002; Ron, 2003; Weizman, 2002), the former Soviet Union (eg. Megoran et al, 2005; Reeves, 2005) and Europe (eg. Donnan & Wilson, 1999; Passi, 1996; Sahlins, 1988). Second, the growth of theorizing around processes of bordering which has involved moving beyond a narrow focus on the study of territorial borders, to thinking more broadly about the meaning and representation of difference. Reflecting the post modern turn in the social sciences, there has been a widening of the ontology and epistemology of borders (Van Houtum, 2005:673).

Less work has been done which combines systematic comparison of borders and bordering processes across time and space, with broader theorization. As Coplan (2010a:1) notes there has been ‘a rather myopic empirical focus on one’s ‘own’ border as a case, to the detriment of comparative or more broadly conceptual and theoretical studies’. There is therefore scope for more genuinely multidisciplinary comparative research. Although there have been some attempts to develop typologies of borderlands, which allow for comparative analysis, they have rarely been developed or applied in a systematic or convincing way.

Several typologies concentrate on differences at the borderline. Martinez (1994) for example, based on his research on the US-Mexico border developed a typology that focused on the quality and dynamics of cross-border interactions, the level of cross border integration, and porosity of the border. This leads to a categorization of four types of borderlands which broadly follows a continuum from a hard, to a soft, to a ‘virtual’ border ie 1) Alienated, 2) Co-existent, 3) Interdependent, and 4) Integrated borders.¹⁶ Zartman’s (2010) typology examines the level of difference at the border, in terms of political organisation and social identity, leading again to four ideal types: (1) *Black and white* (sharp differentiation, clear borderline, closed border e.g. Iron curtain); (2) *Grey* (integrated, hybrid culture, permeable border); (3) *Buffered* (a third weaker group located between two main cultures to insulate and keep them apart); (3) *Spotty* (islands of one culture living in ghettos or enclaves); (4) *Layered* (imposing a dominant population from one group over another eg settler colonies). Finally, More’s classification of borders is based upon a ranking in terms of the level of economic inequalities at the border. His quantitative study provides a ranking of more or less ‘extreme’ borders, his thesis being that highly unequal borders produce particular political, economic and social borderland pathologies.

The above typologies have the virtue of being parsimonious and provide a useful heuristic tool for comparing differing dynamics and relationships at the borderline. But the political economy of borderland zones and their relationships to metropolitan centres are a blind spot in such typologies. Another approach has been to develop typologies of common features and variables within and across borderlands. For example Brunet-Jailly (2004) drawing on research on the Canadian-American border lists the following key variables; market forces and trade flows, policy activities among multiple levels

¹⁶ Vogeler (2010), in a similar fashion, differentiates between soft (open or regulated) borders and hard (fenced or walled).

of government, the political clout of borderlands communities, and the specific culture of these communities.¹⁷ Goodhand (2013) similarly identifies a range of structural and dynamic factors that influence borderland regions including: the depth and breadth of the borderland; the porosity of the borderline; the strategic importance of the border; the resource profile and demographic features of the borderland; the dynamics of elite politics and power structures at the centre and periphery. These typologies perhaps suffer from the opposite problem of being too expansive – by trying to cover everything they may explain very little.

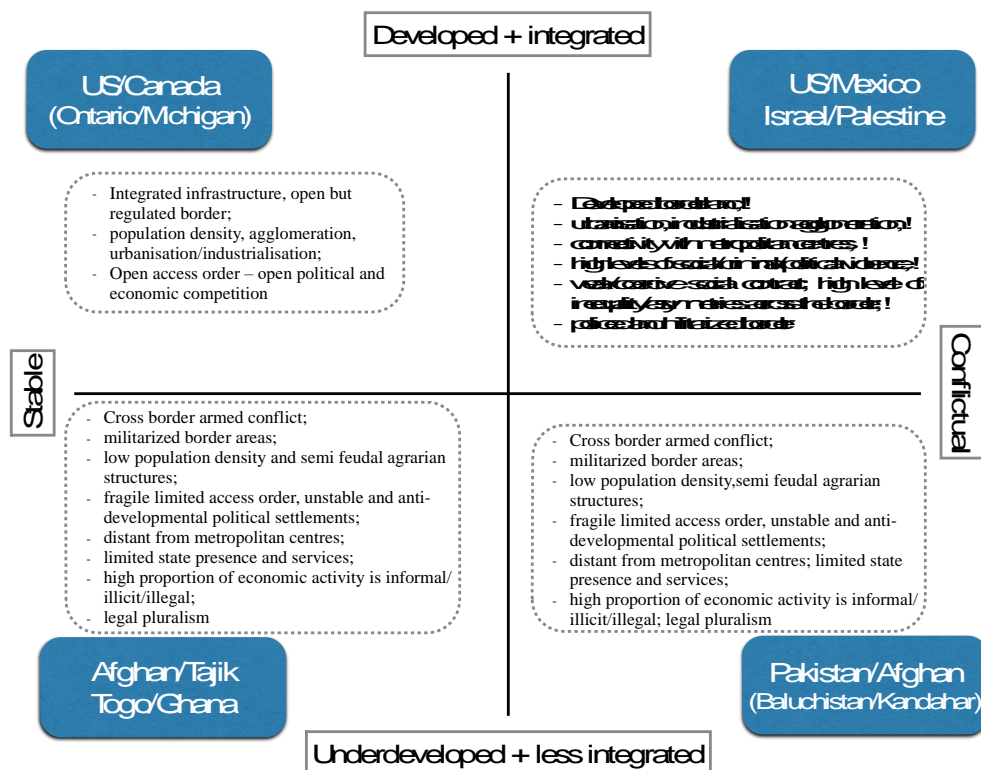
Therefore, as with all typologies, there is a danger of reductionism and simplification, or of a long ‘shopping list’ of factors, with no weighting or prioritization. However as a heuristic device they may aid further theorization about borders. And in relation to development policy and practice, they may sensitize policy makers to borderland issues and provide guidance for appropriate interventions. Most of the borderland typologies above are largely descriptive – they address the ‘what’ questions, but are less useful in relation to the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ of borderlands. Furthermore none have been developed with the practitioner in mind and therefore give few pointers about whether and how to intervene in such contexts.

Fig 2 provides a starting point for comparative analysis of borderland dynamics and intervention strategies focused on development, governance and conflict. Different borderlands can be mapped along two key axes (1) the level of stability/conflict (2) the level of (under)development and integration. Borderlands at the top left hand of the diagram are stable, developed and integrated, which is characteristic of the US-Canadian border and most of the internal borders within the EU. At the opposite bottom right hand side of the diagram is the archetypal ‘troublesome borderland’ characterized by high levels of violence, chronic instability, disconnectedness in terms of formal institutions and licit economic activities, limited state presence and welfare provision, poor economic and social indicators which frequently coincide with horizontal inequalities. The other two quadrants in the diagram – ‘stable but poor/disconnected’ and ‘conflictual and developed/ing’ – provide further scope to examine and reflect upon the reasons why some borderlands forge stable but conservative and

- ¹⁷ Payan (2014), similarly develops an extensive lists of critical variables which are: Historical Baggage; Cultural Bonds; Resource Claims; Demographic Trends; Degree of Institutionalization; Economic Development Gaps; Domestic Environment; Global Context; Technological Differentials.

anti-developmental political settlements whilst others undergoing rapid transitions may experience high levels (and different forms) of violence. The diagram should also encourage reflection on power, space and time. First, how changing power arrangements between centre and periphery and across borders affect the stability and development potential of such areas. Second, how these processes are spatialized, recalibrating centre-periphery relations in terms of distance, density, and division (World Bank, 2009). Third, how borderland arrangements change over time. For example the Afghan-Tajik borderland was located in the bottom right quadrant during the 1980s/early 1990s when there were civil wars on both sides of the border, but with peace settlements in both countries it has migrated to its present position as a relatively stable but poor and marginal borderland.

Fig 2: A comparative framework for studying conflict and development in borderlands



Incorporating a borderland perspective

Development and peacebuilding agencies have become increasingly aware of the need to think beyond the nation state and to deploy regional frameworks and ways of working. ‘Regional integration’

conceptualized as a mix of connectivity projects (transport, ICT), energy projects, and trade facilitation to a large extent reflect the fact that the problem is conceptualised in terms of ‘planning gaps’, or regional strategy gaps. Borderland issues are quite commonly viewed through the lens of ‘lagging regions’ (Farole, 2012; World Bank, 2009). There is also increasing attention to horizontal border dynamics including small traders (Brenton et al, 2011). But arguably borderlands pose a more profound challenge to policy makers, which cannot be addressed simply by attempting to add a borderland perspective to current state-based ways of working. It demands a more substantive change, analytically and methodologically. Taking borderlands seriously does not mean focusing exclusively on the borderland spaces in the developing world. It involves considering how marginality is actively produced – how regions are ‘lagging’ not just because of inherent deficiencies, but due to the effects of embedded power relations. It demands a strategic approach, which requires changes in policies at the systemic level (Uvin, 2002). This has implications for global policy regimes related to trade agreements, counter terrorism, international migration, consumer habits and so forth.

Statebuilding and governance in borderlands

A borderland perspective raises fundamental questions about the nature of the state and state-society relations. On the one hand there are questions about the formal structures and institutions of the state, including choices related to constitutional design – the level of centralisation-decentralisation of power; the balance between executive and legislature; the election system; the role of local government; the justice system and rule of law and so forth. On the other hand there are, what are essentially the first order questions, related to the national level and secondary political settlements, the distribution and power and resources between elites and their networks, the regional political economy and security environment. The two sets of questions are interrelated – the choice of election system for instance plays a role in shaping elite incentives and mobilisation strategies, as recent elections in Afghanistan show. A winner-takes-all Presidential system reduced the scope for power sharing and increased the potential for a violent contestation of power.

A political economy approach means thinking explicitly about the extent to which formal structures and institutional arrangements are in line with existing configurations of power – and a borderland perspective focuses explicitly on the spatialisation of power, and how political settlements have subnational and transnational dimensions.

Although international actors have neither the capacity nor the legitimacy to micro manage political settlements or empower borderland elites, they do need to better appreciate underlying power relations, their spatial dynamics and the vernacular and idioms of local politics (de Waal, 2009; World Bank, 2012). This provides a more convincing platform for ‘behind border reforms’ (World Bank, 2009). The notion that institutions should be ‘spatially blind’ as advocated by the 2009 World Development Report ignores the fact that institutions are culturally and politically embedded and have their own specific histories, which needs to be accounted for in relation to institutional design. For example, in Sri Lanka, many argue that sustainable conflict resolution requires a form of asymmetrical devolution, in order to take into account the specific history of grievances of the country’s north east. Interventions can perhaps create the conditions for more productive ‘conversations’ between states and borderlands – or at the very least not create disincentives for such conversations to take place. This may mean engaging with borderland brokers with unsavoury pasts and hybrid institutions that are less than inclusive. As noted in the World Development Report (2011), there is a need to think carefully about the political and policy signalling that can induce ‘inclusive enough’ political settlements. But accepting hybridity as a feature of the borderland context is not the same as reifying or romanticizing it. For instance tribal policing, the ‘arbaki’ on the Afghan-Pakistan frontier, are not the solution to security challenges on the periphery and cannot simply be replicated throughout the country as some donors and foreign military forces hoped was the case (Goodhand & Hakimi, 2014).

Although development donors do not have the policy levers to directly shape political settlements, their interventions in the area of governance and development have the potential to influence these processes. The kinds of governance capacities promoted by donors are not necessarily the capacities that count in late developing and conflict-ridden countries (Khan, 1996; North et al, 2009). Whilst the goals of good governance are surely desirable, they may be too ambitious given the limited fiscal and reform capacities of such states, and their pursuit can have de-stabilizing effects.

There is a need to look carefully at what kinds borderland actors, institutions and processes may bring about security, and in the long-term lead to more developmental and progressive outcomes. Under what conditions would the Grand Barons of Goma invest in longer-term productive activities? How can such processes of graduation be encouraged? For development donors this could mean rethinking good governance or at least relaxing certain criteria of good governance. In the Burmese case for example, drugs money was laundered through state supported banks and provided the start up capital for development activities in the borderlands (problematic though these are). What kinds of

transitional arrangements would enable drugs traffickers to become licit businessmen or warlords to become state officials (Mukhopadhyay, 2014). It is likely in many of these cases, particularly for borderland brokers, that the governance environment would have to change on both sides of the border zone, thus necessitating sub-national cooperation across the border. This is what the 2009 World Development Report refers to as ‘beyond border reforms’ i.e. investing in regional cooperation and shared cross border institutional arrangements – for example law courts in the Caribbean and central banking in West Africa (World Bank, 2009).

One entry point for tackling governance and state-society relations may be through local service delivery and shared community level infrastructure. Eldon and Cummins (2012) for example suggest that in Baluchistan, community management of local health facilities can be one avenue for helping rebuild peoples’ trust in the state. This is in line with the World Development Report’s (2011) advocacy of a bottom up approach to strengthening state-society relations. The Afghan National Solidarity Programme (NSP), which emerged largely out of the experience of the Kecamatan Development Programme (KDP) in Indonesia, is another example of a programme that seeks to address state-society relations and local governance through service delivery.

Development and Economic Policy

The 2011 World Development Report argues that aid programmes need to ‘build confidence’, ‘transform institutions’, leading to ‘transformational outcomes’, and as already noted it highlights the role of strong leadership and domestic ownership (World Bank, 2011). But how exactly do such aspirations translate in a borderland context? Can development interventions nurture trans-border ownership, leadership and confidence in the state?

As already noted, though globally there has been rising prosperity this has been accompanied by growing spatial inequalities within countries, particularly between metropolitan hubs and lagging peripheral regions. Economic growth, according to the 2009 World Development Report, has primarily been driven by national and regional centres, which benefit from positive neighbourhood effects, including agglomeration, connectivity and supportive institutions. These characteristics exert a centripetal pull on capital and people, leading to a virtuous cycle of further investment, growth and innovation. The key development issue is how to respond to growing spatial inequalities and lagging regions, given their implications for social cohesion and state-society relations.

To what extent do economic policies lead to greater economic divergence or convergence at the border? Do they increase or decrease power asymmetries or the depth/gradient at the border. Do they enhance growth across borders or concentrate it on one side? Do they lead to the further extraction of resources from borderlands, and funnel them to the metropolitan centres? Or do they generate revenues that are reinvested back into borderland services and infrastructure? To what extent does conventional development assistance in border regions mitigate or exacerbate conflict dynamics?

The 2009 World Development report distinguishes between inequality of growth and inequality of income and argues that the former should actually be encouraged and accelerated, whilst reducing the time taken for welfare convergence. It is argued that efforts directed at developing lagging regions through targeting economic growth – including area based development programmes, infrastructure programmes, tax breaks and incentives for investors, special economic zones – have a poor track record. The report's authors argue that instead the state needs to take a more active role in redistributing the fruits of growth to lagging regions – through its fiscal and social welfare policies – as well as focusing on improving connectivity and strengthening the capacity of populations in peripheral regions to compete in the national regional and global market places – through investments in education and training. This approach is summarized in the report as one of 'investing in places' in the growth hubs and 'investing in people' in the lagging regions. However, this analysis perhaps by looking at development through the lens of economic geography, underplays the fact that so called lagging regions are also political and social spaces. Politics, rather than being merely a barrier to efficient spatial interactions, is central to the spatial transformations that development brings. Firstly as already noted, much of the economic activity going on in these zones falls below the radar of the state and of its enumerators but has significant economic implications in the borderlands and beyond. In many ways borderlands are hyper-connected rather than disconnected to global markets, though one should distinguish here between market integration and institutional integration. The economic players in many border regions derive their wealth from their ability to bypass existing institutions through illegal transactions and/or agreements with representatives of these institutions (Walther, 2009: 3). Second, by looking at borderlands as political spaces as well as economic zones, it is clear that development policy needs to be cognizant of the distribution of the costs and benefits of development and its implications for political and social stability. Therefore, as well as being conflict sensitive the World Bank needs to be 'border sensitive' as the impacts of development efforts on state-society relations, political settlements and conflict dynamics in borderland zones are likely to be magnified.

There are some examples of development efforts helping reconnect borderland populations to the state by extending state services. For instance, Harris (2009) provides an account of how in Turkey the extension of irrigation delivery had positive impacts on notions of citizenship and belonging in the eastern borderland region. Another example is the Colombia-Ecuador-Peru border development programmes. The Colombia President's 'Borders for Prosperity' plan 2011 involved \$31 million for infrastructure, education, agricultural development and governance. The Peru-Ecuador joint plan focused on providing infrastructure, education and health care in communities within 40k of the border (ICG, 2014).

However it is more complicated than simply extending state services or generating peace dividends in borderlands, through area-based development and the rehabilitation of marginal areas. On whose terms is re-integration occurring? How are the costs and benefits of new developments distributed? For example in the cases of Burma and Sri Lanka, borderlands development has undermined the political autonomy and voice of borderland populations. Economic development has been used as a strategy to 'blunt the secessionist impulse' and to obviate the need for a more inclusive political settlement. In both places development has been shaped and driven by a military-commercial nexus, reflected in the militarization around investments and the economic concessions to armed groups.

Burmese borderland development has involved processes of state territorialisation and enclosure; the creation of Special Economic Zones in border regions, economic corridors, infrastructure including roads and pipelines, mining and logging. Remote border regions are increasingly linked into regional transport infrastructure and communications through for example the Greater Mekong Sub-Regional Economic Cooperation programme. This has been associated with various negative 'side effects', including land grabbing, the impoverishment of communities, ecological damage and insecurity, leading to passive and active borderland resistance to the effects of adverse incorporation (Meehan, 2014; TNI, 2013; Woods, 2011).

Infrastructural development is often at the forefront of efforts to incorporate and settle borderland regions. From a development angle, roads, railways, communications, irrigation and so forth may be seen as necessary public goods that will enable lagging areas to catch up with the rest of the country. However, as the Burmese example shows, the development of transport and communications are rarely linked to borderland needs and concerns, and are frequently shaped by the military and political priorities of the centre.

The economic fruits of growing connectivity and investment may be captured by groups other than the borderland populations themselves. Therefore development programmes need to have a more explicit focus on horizontal, particularly spatial, inequalities – as already noted, this calls into question the assumed desirability of spatially blind institutions in divided societies, since targeted (political, economic, social) measures may be required to address horizontal inequalities. To what extent can development overcome spatial poverty traps and rebuild confidence in the state? One example of a spatially targeted development programme in a borderland region is the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) programme in the Afghan-Tajik border areas. This involved a multi-sectoral approach, starting with the provision of humanitarian aid in response to civil wars on both sides of the border in the 1990s, and then expanding as security improved into cross border infrastructure (roads, bridges, markets, energy provision), poverty eradication and food security through a range of services including health and education, in addition to employment creation, trade promotion, business development and micro enterprise. There are a number of features of this programme, some of which may be difficult to replicate. Most significant are the religious connections between the Aga Khan and the Ismaili population, which gave the AKDN a unique entry point into the borderlands. Other features which are perhaps more replicable include the long term engagement which spans more than two decades, the very significant infusion of resources (for example the investment of some \$25 million in rehabilitating electrical infrastructure), the strong focus from the beginning on cross border initiatives and the emphasis placed on institution building, including cultural as well as developmental institutions. Yet the success is fragile and wider political events on both sides of the border threaten the gains that have been made, including an outbreak of violence in Khorog in 2012 on the Tajik side of the border as well as declining security in Afghanistan as the insurgency spread to districts close to Ismaili areas. In addition, the AKDN has depended upon an unspoken bargain between the Aga Khan and host governments. This involved giving political space to the AKDN to pursue economic development in the borderlands, so long as it steers clear of politics. But many interpreted the violence in Khorog as the unravelling of this bargain with the Tajik government attempting to reassert its direct control in the borderlands. Within sections of the Parmiri elite, particularly the youth, there is growing dissatisfaction with the notion of economic development at the expense of political voice (Kucera, 2013). In some respects the AKDN has adopted the approach advocated by the 2009 World Development Report of investing in people in lagging areas – education at all levels has been a major plank of its work. However, as an area based development programme, in most other ways it fundamentally diverges from the prescriptions of the WDR. The fact that it has been a qualified

success, highlights the primacy of the politics of place – borderland development is not only about efficient spatial interaction and integration (Rigg et al, 2009). Moreover, recent conflict in the region demonstrates that any advances made are not done so without a struggle; there are interests that benefit from regional inequalities and their perpetuation, and these interests are over-represented in prevailing institutional arrangements (Rigg et al, 2009: 134).

The AKDN is one of several examples of programmes that have attempted to work with and facilitate the mobility of borderland populations. Education is a good example of how the mobility of students and teachers can be facilitated, whether it is Afghans studying in Khorog and Peshawar or Mexican studying across the border in the US. More research is required into the specific characteristics of cross border labour markets (cf Brenton et al, 2011) and how policies on one side of the border affect coping and survival strategies on the other. There is a need to think carefully about the balance between market and institutional integration, and to recognize the trade-off between regulation, which aims to manage or mitigate exploitative practices related to cross border trade and employment, whilst not undermining the economic niches that are central to the coping economy. Small-scale borderland trade is central to the survival of large sections of the population in borderland regions, but development in the long term depends upon the emergence of productive, job creating enterprises in borderland regions. Infrastructure and communications are an important precondition for this, for instance in Afghanistan agricultural commodities have to cross over the border into Pakistan for further processing because of the lack of power and infrastructure.

A borderland perspective also means thinking carefully about trade regimes, tariffs and protection. The default position for regional programmes is to encourage the deregulation of trade, simplify the management of cross border flows, soften borders, and encourage cross border livelihoods. One example of this orientation is the creation of ‘one stop border posts’ which are meant to reduce transaction costs and border crossing time, and have been supported by the World Bank, USAID, JICA in regional development programmes in Africa. There has been an attempt to invest in both hard infrastructure (ports, railways, roads etc) and soft infrastructure (transport related laws and regulations, custom clearance, quarantine) at the border. However, simply opening up and integrating borderland regions, may have damaging effects in the borderlands, and be more broadly de-stabilizing for the state (Meehan, 2014).

Developing markets may not automatically be the same thing as developing states. Successful late developers selectively hardened their borders to protect nascent industries and businesses, prior to opening up border regions to wider competition.

There may be a strong incentive for states to cooperate across borders in relation to the environment and shared natural resources – biodiversity, ecological degradation, pollution, resource management, drought control and so forth are issues that demand a cross border approach. As already noted, borderlands may be exporters of ‘public bads’, but conversely can they help create international or regional public goods? In some cases, environmental concerns may be less politically charged than many other border issues and constitute a productive entry point for cross border collaboration. For instance collaboration between Pakistani and Afghan scientists over shared water resources along the Durand Line might potentially be a form of track three diplomacy, which paves the way for more contentious issues to be addressed.¹⁸ Environmental social movements and NGOs have also become important agents in tackling transborder environment issues. However, whilst there are technical dimensions to these issues, there is no avoiding their political core – as various efforts to develop agreements in the Middle East over shared water sources show. This relates to the international and regional politics, as well as domestic tussles over the types of fiscal and social contracts negotiated between states and borderlands, the nature of the political coalitions and the extent to which resource flows and rents are shared with borderland elites and the wider population. In Burma for instance land use laws negotiated between state and borderland elites systematically undermine farmers’ traditional land use rights (TNI, 2013).

Some of the most rapidly urbanizing places in the world are located in borderlands, and border towns generate their own unique development opportunities and challenges. They are important growth hubs, but they raise difficult questions about how this growth is managed, and how boom and bust dynamics can be transformed into longer term, productive trajectories of development. There is scope for, and some experience of, cross border collaboration between urban councils, municipalities, local politicians, chambers of commerce, private business associations and so forth, on dealing with the challenges of providing services and stimulating and managing growth in border towns. Frontier

¹⁸ Similarly Indian and Pakistani water experts, climate change specialists, economists and former ambassadors have been involved in developing a road map for shared research and water resource management in the Indus Basin.

towns are also magnets for refugees and IDPs. They tend to have highly fluid and mobile populations. On one level these groups may be seen as a drain on resources and services and as competitors in labour markets, but research also shows that they make significant contributions to the economy and are a source of the economic dynamism as well as a new market for goods and services. Rigid visa and migration policies may undermine the potential pay offs that regions can derive from movement between growth poles. And uncoordinated policies on both sides of the border can have perverse effects, which doubly undermine the coping strategies of borderland populations. For example counter narcotics policies in eastern Afghanistan in the mid 2000s occurred at a time when the Pakistani authorities were clamping down on Afghans who were working illegally in Peshawar – the simultaneous closing down of two critical economic niches sent many Afghan households into indebtedness and destitution, leading to the forced sale of assets, and perversely created the conditions for a rebound in poppy cultivation since this constituted the only way to pay back debts (Mansfield, 2011).

Conclusions

A borderland perspective presents challenges to how conflict, development and statebuilding are conceptualized and responded to. This paper has been critical of the tendency amongst policy makers to view borderlands as marginal, disconnected and ungoverned zones, that need to be pacified, incorporated and developed. This state-centric perspective, which views borderlands as passive receptors of state policies and initiatives, misses the role that the margins play in constituting power at the centre. A borderland perspective renders visible, processes that are obscured in state centric modes of analysis. Whilst some borderlands may be lagging regions, others are laboratories of political and economic change. In these marginal spaces, the battles over the mobilization of coercion, capital and representation are particularly intense and contested. The outcomes of these battles have broader significance, as they may shape the trajectory of statebuilding and development processes within countries and wider regions.

A political economy of borderland lens, which involves thinking about the interconnections between power, space and time, does not generate a simple set of policy prescriptions. To some extent it reinforces what is already known to be good practice – taking context seriously, understanding power relations, long term perspectives, appreciating history etc. And perhaps its chief value to policy

makers is to provide another analytical lens – along with several others including gender, conflict, the environment – that can be deployed in contexts where borderland dynamics are a significant factor. This should lead to more targeted, contextually attuned policies, which are cognizant of processes on both sides of the border.

However, a borderland perspective could have more radical implications than this. By exposing the linkages between insecurity and poverty in borderland regions and the metropolitan centres it shows that many of the ‘pathologies’ of the margins are generated by policy regimes and initiatives emanating from the putative centre.

A borderland lens, may therefore point towards the need for a more systemic reappraisal of current policies directed towards peacebuilding, statebuilding and development. At the very least it calls into question several mainstream assumptions, including ideas that; statebuilding and peacebuilding are synonymous with each other; extending the state footprint into borderlands will bring peace and stability; economic integration will reduce insecurity and poverty in border regions; promoting good governance will help stabilize borderlands.

A borderland perspective encourages a more systematic analysis of the trade offs of different sets of policy goals and interventions. It also means being more spatially attuned to who bears the costs of these various interventions.

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