

# GOVERNING BORDERS AND SECURITY

THE POLITICS OF CONNECTIVITY AND DISPERSAL

Edited by Catarina Kinnvall  
and Ted Svensson

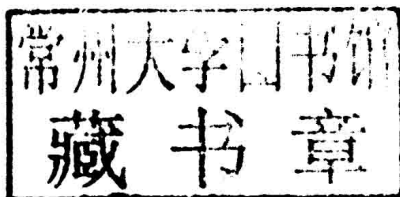
NEW SECURITY STUDIES



# **Governing Borders and Security**

The politics of connectivity  
and dispersal

**Edited by Catarina Kinnvall  
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# Governing Borders and Security

This book explores and maps the relationship between borders, security and global governance.

Theoretically, the book seeks to establish to what degree, and in what ways, traditional notions of borders, security and (global) governance are being eroded, undermined and contested in the context of a globalising world. Borders are increasingly being reconceptualised to account for connectivity as well as divisions, at the same time as focus is shifting from permanence to permeability. The ambivalence ascribed to bordering processes is at heart a security concern; borders are not only entwined with state formation but are also attempts at governing securities, identities and histories.

Proceeding from a critical rendering of statist conceptualisations of borders, security and governance, the book not only emphasises the politics of borders, mobility and relocations, but also provides a shared groundwork for interrogating the spatial conditions for bordering and border work as manifestations of a continuously deferred becoming rather than being. A principal contribution of the volume is its scrutiny of how borders are enacted and perceived in and through the everyday, and of how such production and construal can make sense as acts of resistance to various forms of governing. Such a focus reveals the necessity of investigating how governing from afar affects the possibilities and tendencies to securitise as well as desecuritise, within as well as beyond elite settings.

This book will be of much interest to students of border studies, human geography, governmentality, global governance and IR/critical security studies.

**Catarina Kinnvall** is Professor in the Department of Political Science, Lund University, Sweden, and author/editor of five books and numerous articles.

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**Governing Borders and Security**

The politics of connectivity and dispersal

*Edited by Catarina Kinnvall and*

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# 1 Introduction

## Bordering securities in a global world

*Catarina Kinnvall and Ted Svensson*

On 18 August 2013, David Miranda, partner of the *Guardian* journalist Glenn Greenwald who had written a series of stories revealing mass surveillance programmes by the US National Security Agency (NSA), was held by UK authorities as he was in transit through London Heathrow Airport on his way home to Rio de Janeiro. David Miranda was stopped by officers and informed that he would be questioned under schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000, a law that applies only to airports, ports and border areas and which allows officers to stop, search, question and detain individuals. Miranda was held for nine hours, the maximum time an individual can be held without being charged, whereupon he was released while officials confiscated his mobile phone, laptop, camera, memory sticks, DVDs and games consoles. The decision to detain Miranda was considered 'lawful' by the High Court on 19 February 2014, and was justified by 'legitimate' and 'very pressing' interests of national security. Earlier in the year, the British Prime Minister David Cameron had ordered Britain's top civil servant, Cabinet Secretary Jeremy Heywood, to contact the *Guardian* about material it had obtained from Edward Snowden. The discussions resulted in the newspaper destroying a number of computer hard drives in July 2013, under the supervision of intelligence experts from the Government Communication Headquarters (GCHQ – the British equivalent to the NSA). Snowden received temporary asylum in Russia in August 2013, thus escaping US charges of theft of government property, unauthorised communication of national defence information and wilful disclosure of classified communications intelligence. Top-secret documents leaked by Snowden have, however, continued to form the basis of stories around the world, not least in Britain and the US, about unauthorised electronic surveillance.

This story, from unauthorised surveillance, to the Snowden revelations, to the action against the *Guardian* and the detention of Miranda, is a telling example of how the governing of borders and security has become increasingly intertwined in a global world of digital media and terror discourses. Unauthorised surveillance and the close cooperation between security agencies, such as the NSA and the GCHQ (among others), are both examples of the outsourcing of borders in terms of increased surveillance of activities across national borders in the name of cyber security. According to *Guardian* reporting (Friday 21 June 2013), the GCHQ started 'Mastering the Internet Programme' in 2007 (later referred to as 'Tempura' and similar to the NSA's 'Upstream'). This involved plugging into the cables that

carry internet traffic into and out of the country and garnering material in a process repeatedly referred to as SSE – thought to stand for ‘special source exploitation’. Through such governing of cyber security, the GCHQ and branches of the Home Office have thus been able to respond to real or imagined fears of internal and external threats from unknown sources across domestic borders.

Used as an example, UK’s bordering performance is a good illustration of how processes of integration and globalisation have forcefully exposed the particular nature of territorially based systems of governance and spawned a resultant need to attend to the changing role of state borders. The case of Edward Snowden and the revocation of his passport after he left US territory also show how the actual bordering process is becoming outsourced to airlines and to international airport officers in other parts of the world. In this sense we could talk about a debordering of state borders, but the Snowden case and the ensuing tension between Russia and the world is also being played out as a rebordering process in which the longing for secure borders is being rewritten in a narrative sense. In addition, the re/debordering of security issues manifest in this particular story calls into question the dividing line between state and civil society actors in relation to the media. In an age when surveillance of digital media is increasing, the newsrooms and editorial offices are becoming important sites for re/debordering practices, but also for resistance. Snowden, Greenwood and his partner Miranda, and not least Alan Rusbridger, the editor of *Guardian*, all display evidence of such resisting practices as they have become increasingly involved in the questioning of cyber manipulation and interference – of surveillance. The psychological impact of these events cannot be underestimated as they are profoundly about limits to such techniques. What this case clearly shows is how borders are becoming increasingly malleable. As the governing of borders and security breeds quests for both more surveillance and intensified resistance it prompts and enables connectivity as well as dispersion.

This book is concerned with these processes of governance, bordering and security as connected to a number of theoretical discussions and empirical events. Of particular interest is to grasp the malleability of borders as these are changed, questioned and performed away from state sovereignty and control at the same time as representatives of states and other imagined communities become involved in new techniques of surveillance and control to reinstate borders and boundaries beyond territorial limits. This involves a discussion of borders and bordering in a geographical sense but equally important is the re/debordering of the mobile subject as witnessed in the Snowden/Miranda case and how these mobile subjects are becoming securitised and governed in a world largely defined by quests for security. However, it also points to the desecuritising and debordering acts of resistance and even retaliation against such techniques and how these are played out at a global level.

## **Borders and bordering**

The idea of a ‘borderless’ world, so much in vogue in the 1990s, has had to give way to more complex notions of the nature and content of borders in general and

state borders in particular. The Snowden/Miranda example shows how borders are 'now everywhere' (Balibar 1998), being hard and soft at the same time (Eder 2006), and that it is conceivable and necessary to think of bordering processes as simultaneously enacting vernacularisation and cosmopolitanisation (Rumford 2006). It is also a relevant illustration of how borders are enacted, materialised and performed in a variety of ways (Johnson and Jones 2011). Consequently, attempts at encountering, construing and defining the 'border', 'borderlands' or the 'frontier' have come to draw upon and employ nearly every psychological or geographic conception of space while addressing the problem of pinning down and making borders, boundaries or limits theoretically cognisable. The notion that borders are now everywhere may need some further reflection, however. Ansi Paasi (2011) forwards two important qualifications. One is that borders are often rooted in historically contingent practices and discourses that continue to be related to national ideologies and identities in which emotional bordering tends to be loaded into national celebrations, memorialised landscapes and other elements of national iconographies. A second development can be found in the extent to which technical landscapes of control and surveillance have gained in importance in a post-9/11 world. These may consolidate state space at the same time as they may exist everywhere. Hence we are not denying the importance of state border conceptions, but adhere to a growing body of literature that emphasises the complexity and modality of borders and bordering that are not limited to the state.

Much contemporary social theory has thus become increasingly concerned with the changing nature of borders. Central themes in the social sciences – globalisation, cosmopolitanism, network communities, mobilities and social flows – have prompted social theorists to place borders more centrally in the study of society and international relations (Rumford 2006; Nield 2006; Raley 2008; Salter 2008). To speak of borders, of space and time, says Louise Amoore, 'is to pose a particularly geographic problem in such a way as to bring the discipline of geography into conversation with work from across the humanities and social sciences' (2011: 64). As border studies have become more interdisciplinary, the role of state borders has become more complex (but far from irrelevant) and other borders and boundaries have come into focus, distinguishing neighbourhoods, localities, cities, regions, macro-regional blocs, national, ethnic, religious, cultural and civilisational groupings (Balibar 2004; O'Dowd 2010). Here the emphasis is often on the (re)demarcation of borders as identity construction and control. As border studies have developed and entered other disciplines, there has been a marked shift in focus from fixed physical and geographical borders to bordering or 'borderwork' (Rumford 2008; van Houtum 2005), including attempts to understand more general processes of debordering and rebordering. This book falls within this critical shift as it attempts to cross disciplinary boundaries. However, as discussed further below, some border conceptions continue to be more powerful than others, thus affecting and influencing the ways in which borders work on the ground.

It is important to recognise that the 'border' is at present not an entity, process or term that is assumed to be given or always-already existent, neither as an

object of analysis nor as an analytical modality or site for normative political thinking. Borders are far from being just lines on a map. Borders are hence being reconceptualised to account for connectivity as well as dispersion or divisions, at the same time as focus is shifting from permanence to permeability. The latter results in, on the one hand, a necessary scrutiny of what an altered border conception means for the rendering and experience of the everyday and, on the other, in a need to ponder questions related to the expressions and instrumentalities of boundary drawing that are intrinsic to attempts at delimiting any political community. Drawing on Chris Rumford's (2011) proposition for scholars to 'see like a border', it is possible to outline a number of novel dimensions included in such a vision. One is to acknowledge that bordering processes permeate everyday life at a political, social but also psychological level. It is further to recognise that borders do not always work on behalf of the state if understood in terms of institutionalised borders and a securitised defence. Rather, as explicated in the section below on desecuritisation, local bordering activity may involve the disidentification of state practices – for example, a refusal to let the sovereign speak or decide. Methodologically this can become evident in alternative narratives of resistance. Seeing like a border, Rumford says, does not always imply seeing as the subaltern or identifying with the marginalised, however. Rather it can suggest a focus on all those involved in creating and recreating borders – those actively participating in 'borderwork' – to outline the power struggles involved in this process. Finally, it means recognising that borders are often invisible to some but not to all. The effects of NSA's or GCHQ's surveillance techniques may remain invisible to a majority of American and British citizens, while they were highly visible to David Miranda after he had spent nine hours in detention under the Terrorism Act 2000. However, borders can be invisible in many other respects, involving conformity to identity boundaries that are vastly unequal or patriarchal, thus embodying institutionalised narratives and norms of conduct that remain unchallenged.

### **Mobilities and the (im)mobile subject**

Shifting our attention from permanence to permeability necessitates a focus on and questioning of space and place, as subjects are becoming increasingly mobile and as crucial changes are occurring in mobility practices. People move, things move, ideas move. Mobility, as Tim Cresswell (2006) argues, exists in the same relation to movement as place does to location. A politics of mobility consists of the entanglement of movement, representation and practice, in which 'constellations from the past can break through into the present in surprising ways' (Cresswell 2010: 18–19). What we are witnessing today is a dialectical relationship between mobilities and moorings (Brenner 2004: 64) in which different degrees of 'motility', i.e. potential for mobility, are evidence of unequal power relations. This focus on 'immobility' for certain groups of people problematises the so-called 'grand narrative' of mobility and fluidity and its concern with movement, change and placelessness (Hannam *et al.* 2006; King and Christou 2011; Scuzzarello and

Kinnvall 2013). Many feminist theorists have for instance criticised the idea of 'romantic subjectivity' and the emergence of a 'cosmopolitan' mobility pattern, arguing that it 'depends upon the exclusion of others who are already positioned as not free in the same way' (Ahmed 2004: 152) and that it is 'linked to "bourgeois masculine subjectivity" that describes itself as cosmopolitan' (Skeggs 2004: 49, quoted in Hannam *et al.* 2006: 3).

A mobilities paradigm hence involves tracking the movement of the border on the ground. One way of doing this is to focus on how sovereign power intersects and moves with and through the bodies of migrants and authorities. The attempt made by France to reintroduce border controls to Italy in order to manage the influx of migrants from the Maghreb in the wake of the Arab Spring in 2011 is a clear example of such intersection (Scuzzarello and Kinnvall 2013). Another striking instance of sovereign power mapped onto (individual) bodies could be found in the airplane carrying the Bolivian President Evo Morales in the aftermath of the Snowden escape. The plane, suspected of carrying Snowden, was prevented from crossing European airspace and forced to refuel in Vienna, where it was stopped and searched by Austrian officials. According to the *Guardian* (5 July 2013), Ministers of the European countries appeared to have had their instructions from the United States government and it did not take long before claims that Morales had been 'kidnapped by imperialism' were made by the Bolivian government.

These examples show how borders are related to societal power relations (Paasi 2009). This means that we should study them in context and that we need to be able to answer questions such as who demarcates borders and who constructs narrative boundaries? When and for what purposes do these processes take place? The literature on border studies emphasises the role of political elites in the creation of borders and boundaries. For instance, David Newman (2011) argues that borders are created by political elites who see themselves as acting in the interest of their community and who have the power to keep out 'people and influences which are perceived, at any point in time, as being undesirable' (2011: 35–6). Such an understanding of borders underlines mobility as a politically contested process in which rescaling and restructuring of spatiality must be understood in the light of different regimes of economic regulation and state governance (Hannam *et al.* 2006).

Studying mobilities thus means studying the contested discourses surrounding the mobile subject, but it also involves an engagement with those (mobile) discourses, policies, practices, ideas, authorities, people and institutions that enact borders. Such mobilities are involved in the reorganisation of institutions across the globe and in the movement of risk and dangers as physical and mental spaces become entwined.

## Securitising borders, governing mobilities

As noted in the Snowden/Miranda example, the heightened ambivalence ascribed to bordering processes is at heart a security concern. Borders and boundary drawing incessantly permit or prevent those deemed desirable or undesirable from



gaining entry or access into a particular country, community or group. For many of these, a borderless world continues to be an illusion.

The celebrated debordering of the state ... is far more selective than the inflated rhetoric of globalization would suggest. Debordering is being accompanied in many places by a partial rebordering in the form of enhanced policing. Even as many borders have been demilitarized in the traditional realm of national security, as well as economically liberalized to facilitate commercial exchange, they are also now more criminalized to deter those who are perceived as trespassers. Thus it may be more accurate to say that the importance of territoriality is shifting rather than simply diminishing.

(Andreas 2003: 3)

Policies aimed to secure territorial borders are often implemented through the use of emergency narratives, intended to create a sense of uncertainty and fear, in which mobilities can be governed (Amoore 2006; Aradau 2009; Honig 2009). Emergency narratives call for immediate action, forceful measures and direct interventions and can justify polarised boundary constructions in which friends and foes are properly delineated. Responding to narratives of emergency is also a way to create order from projections of chaos and flux. Within this milieu, as William Walters (2006: 197) argues, 'security becomes something to be marked a "solution"'.

Borders as sustenance, enactment and becoming is hence not solely or primarily entwined with state formation in a strictly material sense, as it involves more diffuse attempts at governing securities, identities and histories. Expressed theoretically, security – consonant with revised perceptions of borders – does not thus belong foremost to the domain of inter-state relations. Rather it is progressively seen as finding resonance in threats and vulnerabilities that arise within states or in challenges to international or global society as such. The consequent broadening and deepening of the security debate is, for example, discernible in the accentuation of 'critical' as well as 'human security' in which securitisation and desecuritisation have come to refer to elements of societal and existential security, often outside and beyond the spatial expanse of the nation state. It is, furthermore, detectable in the increasing emphasis on how e-borders, virtual or biometric, and 'portable' borders are utilised as governance mechanisms through which subjects are rendered mobile, predictable and threatening in accordance with influential notions of belonging and apartness (Amoore 2006).

Geographers have highlighted the importance of remote political borders for delineating differences focusing on e.g. immigration raids (Coleman 2009), data monitoring (Amoore 2007), offshore detention facilities (Mountz 2010) and cognitive boundaries of categories (Jones 2009), while political scientists, political sociologists and international relations scholars have demonstrated a concern for border security discourses (Salter 2010), the limits of sovereignty and virtual biopolitics (Bulley 2009; Vaughan-Williams 2010) and internal threats (Bigo 2002; Huysmans 2006). Here, the workings of discourses on and practices