
**STUDYING INTERNATIONAL BORDERS
IN GEOGRAPHY AND ANTHROPOLOGY:
PARADIGMATIC AND CONCEPTUAL
RELATIONS**

**PREUČEVANJE MEDNARODNIH MEJA
V GEOGRAFIJI IN ANTROPOLOGIJI:
PARADIGMATSKI IN KONCEPTUALNI
ODNOSI**

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Abstract

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Studying International Borders in Geography and Anthropology: Paradigmatic and Conceptual Relations¹

KEY WORDS: border, boundary, boundaries, frontier, border line, border landscape, borderland, cultural landscape; anthropological concepts of boundaries, frontier, border, international borders; geographical concepts of boundary, border, frontier, border landscape, borderland, cultural landscape.

The article presents both classical and current dealings with boundaries and border areas in political geography. It is suggested that these conceptual usages are a suitable starting point in considerations of anthropological concept of boundary. The latter has been decisive in shaping the organisation of perspective on identity and belonging in anthropology since the publishing of Fredrik Barth's seminal *Introduction* to his 1969 edited volume. While there are nuances in understanding of the terminology in the two disciplines that they share (e. g. *frontier*, *boundary*, *border*), the geographical conceptual apparatus offers accents and anticipations characteristic of anthropological concept of boundary. The shared terminology can be said to have relatively wider implications in geography than in anthropology, much more so than many anthropologists of today are ready to acknowledge: it is argued that it is at least the geographical concept of borderland that must be credited with the notion of a dynamic boundary area: it is the notion that is built into the very base of the anthropological concept of boundary.

Izvleček

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Preučevanje mednarodnih meja v geografiji in antropologiji: paradigmatski in konceptualni odnosi

KLJUČNE BESEDE: meja, mejnost, mejni pas, mejna črta, obmejna pokrajina, kulturna pokrajina; antropološki koncepti mejnosti, meja, mednarodne meje; geografski koncepti meja, obmejnosti, obmejnih pokrajin, kulturnih pokrajin.

Prispevek govori o tem, kako se klasične in sodobne političnogeografske obravnave meja in obmejnih ozemelj kažejo kot primerno izhodišče za presojo antropološkega koncepta mejnosti (*boundaries*). Slednji je že vse od temeljnega besedila socialnega antropologa Fredrika Bartha o tej problematiki (1969) v antropologiji pogojeval reorganizacijo perspektive preučevanja kolektivnih pripadnosti in identitet. Kljub sicer različnim disciplinarnim poudarkom v terminologiji, ki si jo geografija in antropologija delita (na primer *frontier*, *boundary*, *border*), lahko v geografskem pojmovniku prepoznamo nekatere poudarke in celo anticipacije, ki so značilne za antropološki koncept mejnosti. Ta terminologija ima v geografski rabi večjo konceptualno razprtost, kot ji jo danes nekateri antropologi priznavajo; zasluga geografov v študijah o mejah, ali bolje o obmejnih ozemljih, se namreč kaže prav v dinamičnem pojmovanju obmejnega prostora, kar je hkrati ena temeljnih lastnosti antropološkega koncepta mejnosti.

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1. Studying International Borders in Geography and Anthropology: Paradigmatic and Conceptual Relations

At first glance, anthropological comprehension of the term »boundaries« has little in common with the term »boundary« as defined in geography. It would seem, however, that through increased emphasis on the symbolic, social, and political meanings of border landscapes in both disciplines, some parallels can be drawn between the geographical views of borders, particularly border landscapes, and the anthropological handling of boundaries. It will be argued below that both disciplinary views offer – and indeed demand – the analysis of the management and contestability of identities along state borders, thus challenging the familiar, commonsensical constructs of political borders as closure lines of allegedly natural populations, i. e., national cultures.

The now all-pervasive interest in international borders within anthropological special field of study, the anthropology of boundaries, is predominantly grounded in the anthropological works of the 1970's – specifically, in the seminal text by Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth entitled *Introduction* in his edited volume *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969). However, it was not until the early 1990's that these considerations were consolidated to such an extent that there appeared the suggestion of creating a new disciplinary specialization, the anthropology of international borders (Wilson and Donnan 1998: 2; Donnan and Wilson 1999: 4).² However, this was not the case with political geography; international borders were defined as one among its constituent disciplinary topics at least a century ago.

It could be said in a somewhat oversimplified manner that due to the classical disciplinary orientation toward »other cultures/societies/tribes/ethnic groups,« anthropologists were mainly concerned with group delineations that usually did not pertain to political borders;³ the locations of group demarcation »lines« have been seen as occupying the space either inside, outside, or along political lines. In the course of time, however, one relevant recognition was brought to the fore within a specialization of social anthropology, the anthropology of ethnicity and nationalism, which successfully consolidated the interest in delineations among »ethnic groups.« In the 1970's, social anthropologists took under scrutiny the very notion of »radical, extra-European otherness,« which was formerly routinely related to »geographical distance.« At that time, many former colonies had gained independence, and the flow of migrants from former colonies to former colonial metropoli further confirmed the anthropologists in believing that »distant others« could not be automatically linked with geographic remoteness. Moreover, the European ideology of the self turned out to be an insufficient basis for identifying »otherness.« Henceforth, identifying »otherness« was not limited to non-European cultures/societies/ethnic groups/minorities within given European national entities but was attributed even to the »samekind« members of the majority »homogeneous« national populations.

Precisely in this line of thinking, the social anthropologist Anthony P. Cohen (1994a) coined his concept of consciousness and committed himself to the study not only of the boundaries between groups, as was common practice in previous dealings with boundaries, but primarily among the selves within a group. Cohen holds that the dominant perspective in Western social science, »from the top down,« from society to the individual, had been far too narrow and rigid. Such a perspective simply extracted individuals from the social structures to which they belonged – from class, nationality, state, ethnic group, tribe, kinship group, gender, religion, caste, generation, etc. – thus creating fictitious relationships (A. P. Cohen 1994a: 6). Moreover, the individual was habitually presented as a passive bearer of social ascriptions. According to Cohen, the reorientation to the concept of consciousness should expand this simple, unidimensional

² Attempts at establishing the anthropology of international borders should not be confused with the host of anthropological works directly or indirectly referring to the space of international borders. Such studies can be traced to at least the 1970's and onwards, when anthropologists began to deal more intensively with the problems of nationalism, political economy, class, migration, and the political disintegration of nations and states (cf. Wilson and Donnan 1998: 4).

³ Donnan and Wilson (1999: 26) state that anthropologists did not theorize on state boundaries in such extent as to include symbolic delineations. When included, state boundaries were treated mainly as »a backdrop to some other line of inquiry.«

deductive model of social belongings in such a way as to demonstrate that the individual is also a co-creator, an actor in the process of group identification and identity management.

Neglecting the individual as the actor and seeing him merely as the bearer of group affiliations were part and parcel of the all-pervasive, if implicit, anthropological preoccupation with boundaries.⁴ Classical anthropological works did not regard the boundary as the explicit subject of interest; rather, boundaries were seen as by-products of differently focused interests. Most authors treated boundaries as unquestioned dividing lines between allegedly »natural« discrete social groups, cultures, etc., thus failing to look »at those more amorphous divisions which appear routinely, not just between cultures nor even within them, but between intimates who share culture« (Cohen 1994b: 65).

It was the authors of the so-called new ethnographic evidence (LeVine and Campbell 1972: 84 ff) who accomplished the break with this tradition. Credited for the critical collection of data and observations and thus creating suitable conditions for the decisive switch in the study of variously conceptualized groups (cultures, societies, tribes, ethnic groups), these authors (notably Edmund Leach, Fredrik Barth, Jack Goody, Michael Moerman, and J. Lehman) re-shaped anthropological thinking from the early 1960's onwards. Presenting various cases from their field investigations, they refuted the predominant understanding of group (co-) existence that insisted that human groups were universally organized as clearly bounded, compact, self-sufficient, and territorially discrete cultures and/or societies. The accumulated body of evidence from different parts of the world testified to the fact that there does not exist a one-to-one relationship between cultural content and discrete boundaries. It became increasingly evident that group complexities and the internal »irregularities« of the entities hitherto seen as bounded and clear-cut were not isolated examples or exceptions in the host of homogenous entities. Such allegedly »exceptional« cases became the prime subject of field investigation due to the increasingly growing evidence that did not support the notion of their exceptionality.

The authors of the new evidence thus helped to articulate a new perspective in which social groups as systems were conceived as having varying degrees of discreteness rather than unchangeable boundaries; therefore, the very changeability of systemic divisions was proven with the frequency of coinciding of numerous specific functional-organizational boundaries (LeVine and Campbell 1972: 81).⁵ It was Fredrik Barth's introduction of the term »boundaries« to the anthropological conceptual vocabulary (1969) that substantially contributed to the more subtle understanding of group co-existence. Namely, while the classical approach mainly concerned itself with the typology of ethnic groups (»tribes« and »cultures«, especially »primitive« and »traditional« ones), their (supposedly discrete) cultural contents, and the sources of these differences, the new focus of interest became ethnic boundaries and their maintenance. Barth asserted that persistent and overt cultural differences between two groups in contact are usually preserved and maintained precisely because of the interaction across such boundaries and only rarely because of mutual isolation: »Cultural differences can persist despite inter-ethnic contact and interdependence« (Barth 1970: 10).

From this analytical perspective, the ethnic boundary demonstrated itself mainly through the actor's strategy of selected signaling as either overcommunicating or undercommunicating those cultural differences that the actor recognizes as significant in a given situation. The recognition that overt »objective« diacritica of cultural differences as perceived by the researcher are but rarely in accord with those perceived by the actors prompted Barth to identify the play of self-ascriptions and external ascriptions as the most revealing or critically important arena of ethnic diacritica in the host of possible cultural differences between groups in contact. This perspective revealed to the researcher the existence of boundaries among groups in contact that were not easily seen from without, while seemingly obvious differences were rendered spurious.

⁴ »When anthropologists defined the subject as the study of other cultures, they necessarily (if unwittingly) placed 'boundary' at the very center of their concerns. The relativism of anthropologist/anthropologized, us/them, self/other, clearly implies boundary« (Cohen 1994b: 63).

⁵ Concerning the nature of sociocultural entities and their boundaries, LeVine and Campbell (1972: 85–99) created and discussed five newly emphasized and documented phenomena: 1. territorial penetration among the members of different ethnic communities; 2. continuous variation in cultural and linguistic characteristics; 3. disagreement concerning ethnic community boundaries or labels; 4. interaction across (boundaries!) of ethnic communities with: a) military alliances, b) joking relationships; and 5. shifting ethnic identity and culturally defined life-styles.

Barth was primarily interested in social boundaries between ethnic groups – although he admitted the existence of their territorial counterparts. He was able to explain the enduring reproduction of boundaries between ethnic groups by questioning the very criteria of belonging; he stressed that in diagnosing membership in an ethnic category, only socially relevant factors apply and not the overt »objective« cultural differences, the existence of which can be generated by other factors (1970: 15). And secondly, if an ethnic group maintains its identity through interaction with other entities of a kind, it follows that the criteria for membership or non-membership are formed in this interaction and are signaled within it.

For a clearer understanding, let me rephrase a central Barthian premise: when ethnicity is recognized as a social organizational principle, it becomes – in contrast to previous notions of self-sufficient, clearly divided cultures – the subject of the study of the process of creating and maintaining social boundaries among persons and groups who otherwise think of themselves as belonging to, for example, different »cultures.« The boundary among ethnic groups is no longer regarded as a static phenomenon, as a frozen dividing line which crucially informs all social action within its own perimeter. Instead, it is regarded as a dynamic phenomenon of changeable forms: the analysis of its processual character is henceforth the point of departure for studying the relationships between ethnic groups. In this vein, the term »boundary« does not stand as an equivalent for a political borderline but rather implies a series of symbolic delineations that the actors use in defining their social reality.

Also very instructive in this light are sociogeographical concepts of boundaries, frontiers, and border landscapes. It would seem that the standardized use of the conceptual pair »frontier/boundary« in political geography primarily indicates that »boundary« is reserved for a precisely defined political border of sovereign nation-states while the meaning of »frontier« remains vague (cf. Kristof 1959: 270). The solution might be to take »frontier« to mean a belt or a zone rather than a line, e. g., a »boundary,« although the majority of classic authors in political geography – with Friedrich Ratzel at their head – emphasized the need to conceive of such a line only in the broader territorial context (cf. Prescott 1978: 29).⁶ It would seem that anthropologists as well adopted this usage of terms. As Anthony P. Cohen quoted Coakley:

»Political geographers conventionally distinguish between *boundaries*, which have a precise, linear quality, and *frontiers*, which have more diffuse, zone connotations. The concept of frontier has a broader social significance than the more restrictive legal concept of boundary« (Coakley; in A. P. Cohen 1994b: 62).

In anthropological usage, one can find quite opposite meanings of the same terminology. According to Cohen, the term »boundary« stands for the broadest concept of delineation, while »border« is taken to mean situationally specific boundaries. The term »frontier« has been fairly strictly limited to geopolitical and legal boundaries (A. P. Cohen 1994b: 63). As Cohen puts it:

»The distinction can be accomplished simply by regarding *frontiers* and *borders* as matters of fact; whereas *boundaries* are the subjects of claim based on a perception by at least one of the parties of certain features – diacritical features – which distinguish it from others« (A. P. Cohen 1994b: 63; emphases added).

It would seem that such a definition implies the crucial role of the actor's self-ascription in a boundary situation, quite in accord with the Barth's basic thesis on the boundedness of an ethnic group. As a further condition necessary for a boundary to exist, Cohen recognizes the following:

»Whether it refers to a collective condition, such as ethnic group identity, or to something as ephemeral as 'personal space', boundary suggests contestability, and is predicated on consciousness of a diacritical property« (A. P. Cohen 1994b: 63).

⁶ Although Prescott (1978: 33) ascertained that political geographers used the term »frontier« in two senses – as the political division between two countries or the division between the settled and uninhabited parts of one country – he emphasized that in each sense the frontier was considered a zone.

Let us now turn to some of Cohen's observations on the difference between anthropological and geographical usage of the terms »boundary« and »frontier.« We can agree that most geographers have used the term »boundary« in the sense of a legally defined demarcation line, while the term »frontier« was used to mean a broader territorial belt along the borderline. However, the following should be stressed:

First, as noted by Prescott (1978: 15), it was Ratzel – as the pioneer political geographer – who pointed to the dynamic rather than static quality of borders in general as early as 1897 in his famous work *Politische Geographie*. Prescott comments that such a view was congruent with the period in which Ratzel lived and worked: essentially, Ratzel was describing the processes of establishing and building the German state of his time and its colonial empires in Asia and Africa. Also, he was concerned with the practical needs of military strategists, thus recognizing the importance of strongly defended state borders. However, although Ratzel distinguished between border line and border zone, and ascribed the legal reality to the former, he emphasized at the same time that these lines could not be regarded outside the context of a border landscape, a view that implied a dynamic comprehension of the issue. In this respect, some of Prescott's observations are valid; much like Anthony P. Cohen, he talks about the most widely spread usage of terminology in political geography, simultaneously drawing attention to the various, sometimes even different usages of the concepts – dependent, of course, on the special interests and the period in general in which one worked (Prescott 1978: 29).⁷

It would be useful at this point to add to A. P. Cohen's explanations by saying that the study of a political boundary in geography is not limited to the boundary-as-line alone; it is widely recognized that while those lines are indeed a reality in themselves, it is nevertheless necessary to embed them into the broader context of the encompassing area (cf. Prescott 1978: 29). Moreover, according to Prescott (*ibid.*: 192), one of the four aspects of boundary research in political geography should be precisely the notion of the political boundary as an element of the cultural landscape.

Second, despite the prime topic in geographical as well as legal discourse – the study of boundaries – one can identify strong similarities in the geographers' interbellum notion of borders as enclosure lines of a »uniform ethnic mass« and the classical anthropological view of the »ethnic group«; the latter was conceived as a firmly bounded territorial package, homogeneous inwards and distinctive outwards. In the words of anthropology's founding father, Bronislaw Malinowski:

»An ethnographic map of the world shows, on every continent, well-defined boundaries which separate one tribe from the other. The unity of such a tribe consists *de facto* in the homogeneity – at times, identity – of culture [...] The tribe in this sense, therefore, is a group of people who conjointly exercise a type of culture [...] This, I submit, is the prototype of what we define today as nationality: a large group, unified by language, tradition, and culture. To the division as we defined it between primitive culturally differentiated tribes there correspond today such divisions as between Germans and Poles, Swedes and Norwegians, Italians and French« (Malinowski; in LeVine in Campbell 1972: 83).

Prescott finds that one can identify a very similar concept of ethnic groups – i. e., as discrete bounded entities – in the geographers' works on boundaries from the time before W. W. I., the interbellum period, and the time just after W. W. II. It is perhaps not redundant to repeat that political boundaries in those times were the explicit subject of research in political geography and international law (Prescott 1978: 20). It is an interesting observation from Prescott that the scholars in international law of the time were basically interested in terminology because of the international boundary treaties that did speak of the ethnic characteristics of border territories, although in their definitions they did not as a rule explicitly refer to them. In this light, the Holdich case is particularly illustrative. Insisting on strong artificial boundaries (see foot-note 7), Holdich criticized L. W. Lyde's 1915 book *Some Frontiers of Tomorrow: an Aspiration for Europe*, where the author speculated that state boundaries should be so drawn as to assure the maximum ethnic homo-

⁷ In this vein, Prescott (1978: 18, 28–29) explained Holdich's preoccupation with strong defensive boundaries in 1916. Holdich took an active part in W. W. I. and had extensive experience in imperial India; he also participated in many boundary commissions.

geneity of the state territory in question and provide for areas where two state populations could meet and, hopefully, mingle (Holdich; in Prescott 1978: 18). This reminds one of the statement of the retired Major General and honorary Professor of Geography at the University of Munich, K. Haushofer, who in 1927 insisted that it was the duty of the government to establish the strongest possible boundary surrounding an ethnically homogenous population, the bearers of the German *Kultur* (Prescott 1978: 22).⁸

Indispensable for further comparison between anthropological and geographical conceptualizations are the writings of the geographer Boggs. Prescott (1978: 25) mentions his book *International Boundaries: a Study of Boundary Functions and Problems* from 1940, which was written with the ambition of comparing boundaries of all kinds, even those among continents. Boggs calculated the lengths of international boundaries within each continent and extrapolated the ratios between total boundary length and total state surfaces. The index thus obtained would supposedly enable comparison between continents. Similarly ambitious and ubiquitous attempts at classifying and comparing can be found in postwar anthropological writings as well; anthropologists of the time were mostly preoccupied with ways to make a conclusive inventory of »cultures« from all over the world. An exemplary work of such magnitude is J. P. Murdock's 1953 book with the telling title *Outline of World Cultures for an Attempt to List All the Cultural Entities Known to Ethnography*.

However, political geographers (like anthropologists) did not stick with Boggs' program of grand comparisons. Although Minghi observed in 1963 that in Boggs' time, one could have discerned a shift in standard boundary studies »away from the nature of the boundary's location and history, to its function as it has changed over time« (1963: 407), Stephen B. Jones's statement from 1945 has a very modern ring to it: »Each boundary is almost unique and therefore many generalizations are of doubtful validity« (Jones; in Prescott 1978: 27).

To go back to A. P. Cohen's evaluations, a possible misinterpretation on his part may be traced to the fact that he ignored the geographical concept of borderland. Minghi (1991: 15), for instance, suggests a methodology that would make possible the comparative research of two or several boundaries and simultaneously the analysis of respective borderlands in their temporal settings. Such an approach would, according to Minghi, accommodate both views of boundaries: on the one hand, the classical political-geographical notion of boundaries as lines that mark the edges of national space and, on the other, borders as interfaces along the edges of national units. He further proposes a somewhat paradoxically defined concept of borderland: »the boundary creates its own distinctive region, making an element of division also the vehicle for regional definition« (Minghi 1991: 15).

In this way, the conditions of inhabitation along the boundary would become the major factor of the cultural landscape, which, in turn, is also defined by the boundary. For this reason, boundary analysis should focus on the boundary's cultural landscape, that is, the borderland (Minghi 1991: 15). The inclusion of time and space processuality into boundary analyses is a very significant characteristic of modern discourse in geography, one that seems convergent on the modern anthropological boundary concept. Both discourses suggest the occurrence under the »visible« diacritica of two entities in contact (for instance, deconstructing the legal demarcation line), taking into account the perspective of the borderlanders, and are thus able to discern as well the flexible (non-static) and changeable scale of border locations.

The fact that most boundary studies in political geography and international law pertained to war or conflict periods undoubtedly affected the style and content of boundary investigations; it also prompted Minghi to challenge geographers to a more subtle study of boundaries in peaceful, ordinary, harmonious contexts as well (1991: 17,18); such contexts would render the concept of border landscape very useful.⁹

The term »borderland« itself is not a new one: Stephen Jones used it in the title of his article¹⁰ on a section of the Canada-USA boundary as early as 1937. It is more surprising that at that early time, he was able to observe that *cultural dissimilarities* in this borderland zone were not due to reasons of nature or

⁸ Haushofer's and similar views must be regarded in the context of discussions of Germanness (*Deutschtum*) of that time.

culture as such but were engendered by *the presence of the boundary* itself (Jones; in Minghi and Rumley 1991: 2; emphases added). Platt advanced a very similar conclusion in an account he published together with Bucking-Spitta in 1958 on a section of the Dutch-German boundary:¹¹

»Landscape and occupance have been found similar on opposite sides. The boundary is not natural and does not separate different uniform regions. It could be pushed east or west without changing the appearance of things in general on opposite sides [...] although the forms of areal organization may be similar on opposite sides of the boundary the organizations themselves, the units of organization, political, economic and social, as they have developed through years of human activity, are generally separate. A shift of the boundary in either direction disturbs the organization in units small and large on both sides, and generally does damage which can only slowly if ever be repaired« (Platt and Bucking-Spitta; in Prescott 1978: 196–197).

A somewhat overly naïve observation occurred to John Augelli (1980) who, commenting on the island of Hispaniola along the borderland between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, concluded that »borderlands [...] tend historically to be zones of cultural overlap and political instability where the national identity and loyalties of the people often become blurred« (Augelli; in: Minghi and Rumley 1991: 3). Such and similar mechanistic notions were explicitly refuted by Robert Minnich in his study of Valcanale, Italy, emphasizing that the ways in which state borders arbitrarily separate people do not result in a confused identity: »In my presence the older inhabitants of Valcanale frequently complained that 'they speak their own local dialect (i. e., the Slovene dialect), they are Carinthians at heart but are destined to live in Italy'« (Minnich 1993: 92–93). Identities may appear blurred when considered from the point of view of the state, which has precisely codified and at the same time very exclusivist rules about who is or is not member/citizen. However, this does not automatically cause the people who live in border situations, which are difficult for a state to define, to have confused identities.

As mentioned above, such observations and statements were characteristic for social science of the new evidence in the 1960's. Especially anthropologists produced the critical reversal in studying identity, ethnicity, and loyalty, strongly emphasizing the boundary: they can be said to have reoriented their attention from the static collectivities to their dynamic (overt and covert) boundaries. Mechanical notions of collective identities, hitherto regarded as functions of social institutions, were questioned for their failure to account for the people's self-understanding.

It is also perhaps useful to speculate as to the reasons why social scientists in other disciplines demonstrate only perfunctory interest in classical geographical boundary studies: Minghi and Rumley (1991: 3–4), for example, pointed to »the lack of real concern with the development of border landscape theory«; classical geographical evidence was largely grounded in descriptive, classificatory case studies that did not concern themselves with processuality. Narrow approaches like this were primarily concerned with physical artifacts (for example, boundary markers). Only in the 1980's did cultural geographers begin more intensively to work on the symbolic qualities of landscapes, endeavours that led to the identification of their socially and politically ascribed meanings. John House suggested a move away from the fixation with visible function and toward viewing the border landscapes as products of a set of cultural, economic, and political interactions and processes occurring in space (House; in Minghi and Rumley 1991: 4). Minghi and Rumley (1991: 4) even proposed a comparative approach that would allow for viewing the border landscape in the perspective of the neighbouring states and their inhabitants.

⁹ It seems that only now the state of affairs in political geography is susceptible to such an appeal. As Minghi suggested in 1963: »More attention to the 'normal' situation is needed in boundary research. Therefore, while the discussion in this paper has centered more on studies concerning boundary disputes and changes, the author believes that the studies falling in the other categories have served as important supplements to boundary science« (Minghi 1963: 427).

¹⁰ *The Cordilleran Section of the Canadian-United States Borderland.*

¹¹ *A Geographical Study of the Dutch-German Border.*

2. Conclusion

In summarizing the relationships between the anthropological and geographical usages of the terms »border,« »frontier,« and »boundary,« it may be concluded that the established meanings of the same terms in the two disciplines definitely differ; however, it is in the geographical tradition that the terminology was used in a more sophisticated manner and was conceptually more consistent. It would appear that we cannot completely agree with A. P. Cohen's statement that in geography, »boundary« stands for political boundaries as lines only; let us remember once more that it was Ratzel who, among other classics, pointed out that political boundaries should be studied in the context of their border landscape. The latter term may be understood to infer a door to topics beyond the given legal reality; these topics may well be encompassed by yet another geographical concept, the concept of frontier. However, we can agree with Cohen that the term »boundary« was used by geographers mainly to denote political boundaries: in the first decades of the twentieth century, international law and political geographical perspectives primarily sought to define clear delineations between »ethnically homogeneous units« following what was regarded as the »natural« or »European« pattern.

The problem of the precise usage of terminology was further developed in geographical debates on border landscapes: like anthropologists, geographers were increasingly aware that cultural dissimilarities in border areas are determined with the existence of (political) boundaries and that they are not natural facts; that border landscapes historically tend to overlap and thus get interpreted as regions of political instability; and that defining national identities and the political or other loyalties of the populace along the borders is a very complex task.

To conclude with Cohen's discussion on the kindred terms »border,« »boundary,« and »frontier« in anthropological usage, it can be seen that among them, the term »boundary,« when taken as a matter of consciousness, is semantically the most accommodating of the three. While the terms »frontier« and »border« have »something in common with the taxonomic absoluteness of anthropological categories,« boundaries have to do with the »blurriness and elusiveness of symbols« (Cohen 1994b: 70). Thus the term »boundary« possesses a quality of infinity, ambiguity, and contestability, while »frontier« and »border« describe finite phenomena. It is precisely the analytic possibility of grasping contestable collective identities on both individual and collective levels that makes the boundary concept applicable to matters of consciousness, not merely to tangibly bounded entities. In Cohen's words:

»Historically, anthropology has privileged the collective and dogmatic and neglected the individual and experiential ... As a result, we have failed to get to grips with the meanings of boundaries. Instead, we have invented them as meaningful« (A. P. Cohen 1994b: 72).

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Summary in Slovene – Povzetek

Preučevanje mednarodnih meja v geografiji in antropologiji: paradigmatški in konceptualni odnosi¹²

Duška Knežević Hočevar

Antropološko pojmovana mejnost ima na prvi pogled malo skupnega z geografsko opredeljenim pojmom meje. Vendar se vse bolj zdi, da z vidika naraščajoče pozornosti na simbolne, družbene in politične pomenne mejnih ozemelj lahko potegnemo nekatere vzporednice med geografsko obravnavo meja in obmejnih ozemelj še posebej in antropološko obravnavo mejnosti. Obe namreč dopuščata ali celo zahtevata analizo identitetne manipulabilnosti, preklapljanja, spodbojnosti, oziroma postavljata na laž konstrukte o političnih mejah kot zapiranih domnevno naravnih populacij, nacionalnih kultur.

V antropološki tradiciji študij mejnosti, ki jim je bil najrazločnejši temelj postavljen v sedemdesetih letih z besedilom norveškega antropologa Fredrika Bartha – *Uvodom v delo Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969), je zanimanje za mednarodne državne meje relativno novo. Šele devetdeseta leta so konsolidirala antropološke presoje mednarodnih meja v taki meri, da se je pojavila celo sugestija po oblikovanju nove antropološke disciplinarne specializacije, antropologije mednarodnih meja (Donnan in Wilson 1998: 2 in 1999: 4).¹³ Tega pa ne bi mogli trditi za politično geografijo, saj je mednarodno mejo definirala kot eno med konstitutivnimi disciplinarnimi temami že vsaj dobro stoletje poprej.

¹² Besedilo je prirejeno prvo poglavje iz avtoričine knjige Družbena razmejevanja v dolini zgornje Kolpe. Domačinska zamišljajna nacije in lokalitete, 1999, Ljubljana: ZRC.

Nekoliko poenostavljeno bi mogla reči, da je v antropološki tradiciji zaradi klasične disciplinarne naravnosti na preučevanje »drugih kultur/družb/plemen/etničnih skupin«, prevladalo ukvarjanje s skupinskimi razmejevanji, katera pa se ponavadi niso nujno navezovala na politične meje;¹⁴ lokacije skupinskih razmejevanj namreč lahko zasedajo prostor znotraj, zunaj in nenazadnje ob političnih mejah. Ščasoma pa se je v specializaciji socialne antropologije, antropologiji etničnosti in nacionalizma, ki je dodobra utrdila interes za preučevanje razmejevanj med »etničnimi skupinami«, uveljavilo še eno relevantno spoznanje. Socialni antropologi so v sedemdesetih letih pod drobnogled vzeli tudi samo obravnavo »radikalne, zunaj evropske drugosti« ali »drugačnosti«, ki se je poprej praviloma navezovala na »geografsko oddaljenost« preučevanih skupin. Tedaj so v večini primerov nekdanje kolonije že pridobile status suverenih nacionalnih držav, tok migrantov iz nekdanjih kolonij v nekdanje metropole pa je antropologe še bolj utrdil v prepričanju, da »oddaljenih drugih« ni moč več avtomatično navezovati na geografsko oddaljenost. Še več, evropska ideologija »našosti« se je izkazala za nezadostno predpostavko obravnavanja »drugosti«. Identificiranje »drugosti« poslej ni bilo rezervirano zgolj za neevropsko kulturo/družbo/etnično skupino/manjšino znotraj določene evropske nacionalne entitete, ampak se je nanašalo celo na »istorodne« pripadnike večinske »homogene« nacionalne populacije.

Prav v tem oziru je socialni antropolog Anthony P. Cohen (1994a) aktualiziral koncept zavesti in se zavzel ne le za preučevanje mejnosti med skupinami, kot je bilo to običajno početje poprejšnjih antropoloških ukvarjanj z mejami, temveč med zavestni pripadnikov iste skupine. Cohen je namreč prepričan, da je v »zahodnem družboslovju« prevladujoča perspektiva preučevanja odnosa posameznik – družba »od zgoraj navzdol« preozka in preveč rigidna. Taka perspektiva posameznika preprosto deducira iz družbenih struktur, katerim pripada – razreda, nacionalnosti, države, etnične skupine, plemena, sorodstvene skupine, spola, religije, kaste, generacije itd. in ustvarja izmisleke (A. P. Cohen 1994a: 6). Še več, posameznika predstavi kvečjemu kot pasivnega nosilca družbenih pripisov. Preusmeritev pozornosti na koncept zavesti bi po Cohenu utegnila razpreti prav ta preprost, enodimenzionalen, deduktiven model družbenih pripadnosti in pokazati, da je posameznik tudi soustvarjalec oziroma dejaven akter v procesu skupinskega identificiranja, oziroma identitetnega upravljanja.

Prezrt odnos do posameznika kot dejavnega akterja in ne zgolj nosilca skupinskih pripadnosti je bil značilen tudi za večino implicitnih antropoloških ukvarjanj z mejami.¹⁵ V teh študijah, ki so predhodile prej omenjenim klasičnim mejnim študijam, meja kot taka ni bila predmet preučevanja, ampak prej stranski proizvod obravnave drugih vsebin, ki so tedaj prevladovala v trendnih antropoloških raziskovalnih usmeritvah. Večina jih je gledala na mejo predvsem kot na nevprašljivo ločnico med domnevno naravno ločenimi družbenimi skupinami, kulturami, ipd., ne da bi vzela pod drobnogled »bolj amorfna razhajanja, ki se ne pojavljajo samo med kulturami in v kulturah, ampak tudi med vedeži, ki imajo kulturo« (Anthony P. Cohen 1994b: 65).

Prelom s tako tradicijo so v kulturni in socialni antropologiji v glavnem izvedli predstavniki t. i. nove etnografske evidence (LeVine in Campbell 1972: 84 ff), ki so zaslužni za odločilen nabor podatkov in premislekov, s katerimi so ustvarili pogoje za preobrat v preučevanju različno konceptualiziranih skupin: bodisi kot kultur, družb, plemen, etničnih skupin. S primeri iz svojih terenskih raziskav so odločilno zamajali dotlej prevladujoče razumevanje skupinskega sobivanja, po katerem so bile človeške skupine univerzalno organizirane kot jasno razločene, kompaktne, samozadostne, v sebi institucionalno razvejene in tudi ozemeljsko jasno razmejene kulture in/ali družbe. V šestdesetih letih so socialni antropologi (kot na pri-

¹³ Poskusa oblikovanja antropologije mednarodnih meja ne gre zamenjevati s kopico antropološkega dela, ki se posredno ali neposredno navezuje na mednarodne meje. Tovrstne študije lahko zasledujemo vsaj od sedemdesetih let dalje, ko so se antropologi začeli bolj intenzivno ukvarjati s problemi nacionalizma, politične ekonomije, razreda, migracije in politične dezintegracije nacij in držav (prim. Donnan in Wilson 1998: 4).

¹⁴ Donnan in Wilson (1999: 26) pravita, da antropologi državnih mej niso teoretizirali v taki meri kot simboličnih razmejevanj. Če pa so jih že vključevali v svoje študije, so jih posredno obravnavali, predvsem kot »zastor za nekatere druge smernice preučevanja«.

¹⁵ Anthony P. Cohen celo zatrjuje: »Ko so antropologi definirali svoj predmet preučevanja kot preučevanje drugih kultur, so nujno (červno nenamerno) postavili 'mejnost' prav v središče svojih zanimanj. Relativizem antropolog/antropologizirano, mi/oni, jaz/drugi razločno implicira mejnost« (1994b: 63).

mer Edmund Leach, Fredrik Barth, Jack Goody, Michael Moerman, J. Lehman itd.) na več koncih sveta vse pogosteje dokumentirali evidenco, ki ni potrjevala sovpadanja med enotno kulturno vsebino in njenimi razločnimi mejami. Vse bolj se je uveljavljalo spoznanje, da skupinske kompleksnosti in notranje iregularnosti tistega, kar so od zunaj gledali kot razločno razpoznavne meje, niso bile osamljeni primeri ali izjeme v množici homogenih entitet. Taki dotlej izjemni primeri so prav zaradi vse večjega obsega v evidentiranju kmalu postali predmet terenskega preučevanja.

S tem so producenti nove evidence ponudili teoretično perspektivo, s katere je bilo moč družbene skupine razumeti kot sisteme s spreminjajočimi se stopnjami družbenosistemske ločenosti, in ne kot entite oziroma sisteme z nespremenljivimi mejami; spreminljivost sistemskih ločnic naj bi bila pogojena prav s pogostnostjo sovpadanja številnih specifičnih funkcijsko-organizacijskih mejnosti (LeVine in Campbell 1972: 81).¹⁶ V tem oziru je prav Barthova vpeljava pojma mejnosti v antropološki konceptualni besednjak (1969) prispevala bistveno občutljivejše razumevanje skupinskega sobivanja. Če se je namreč klasični pristop ukvarjal predvsem s tipologijo etničnih skupin (kar je nekako ob koncu petdesetih let pomenilo zbirno ime za »plemena« in »kulture«, predvsem »primitivne« in »tradicionalne«) in njihovih (razločenih) kulturnih vsebin in izvora teh razlik, se je zdaj težišče preučevanja premaknilo k etničnim mejnostim in njihovemu vzdrževanju. Barth je namreč trdil, da se vztrajne in očitne kulturne razlike med dvema skupinama v stiku praviloma ohranjajo in vzdržujejo prav preko in zaradi takih mejnosti, ne pa v kaki izolaciji: »Kulturne razlike lahko vztrajajo kljub medetničnemu stiku in medsebojni odvisnosti« (Barth 1970: 10).

Problem etnične meje se je v tej analitični perspektivi pokazal predvsem kot strategija akterjevega izbrana signaliziranja, poudarjanja ali omalovaževanja (*overcommunicating/undercommunicating*) kulturnih razlik, pač tistih, ki se akterjem v dani situaciji kažejo kot pomembne. In ker raziskovalcu navzven razpoznavni »objektivni« razločevalci kulturnih razlik nemalokrat niso v skladu s pokazatelji, ki jih akterji prepoznajo za razločevalne, je Barth v množici možnih kulturnih razlik med dvema skupinama v stiku kot najpovednejši ali odločilni diakritik prepoznal samopripis in pripis s strani drugih (*self-ascription/ascription*). To pa je na poseben način določilo tudi problem začrtanih meja. – S tako organizirano perspektivo opazovanja je bilo raziskovalcu namreč odstrto tudi tako prepoznavanje mej med pripadniki dveh skupin v stiku, ki niso bile navzven vidne, ali pa so se določene navzven očitne razmejitve izkazale kot lažne.

Bartha so torej v prvi vrsti zanimale družbene mejnosti med etničnimi skupinami, čeprav je dopustil, da se te včasih ujemajo tudi z ozemeljskimi mejami. Trajno ustvarjanje mejnosti med etničnimi skupinami je Barth potemtakem pojasnjeval tako, da je problematiziral sam kriterij pripadnosti. Pomembni za določanje članstva v določeni etnični kategoriji so tako lahko le družbeno pomembni dejavniki in ne očitne, »objektivne« kulturne razlike, ki jih lahko ustvarjajo drugi dejavniki (1970: 15). In drugič, če skupina vzdržuje svojo identiteto s tem, da so njeni člani v interakciji z drugimi, iz tega izhaja tudi merilo za določanje članstva oziroma nečlanstva, in načini opozarjanja na članstvo oziroma nečlanstvo.

Z drugimi besedami: ko je etničnost kot družbenoorganizacijski princip prepoznana, postane v nasprotju s poprejšnjimi obravnavami samozadostnih, ločenih kultur predmet preučevanja ustvarjanje in vzdrževanje družbenih mejnosti med osebami in skupinami, ki sicer zase mislijo, da pripadajo različnim »kulturam«. Mejnost med etničnimi skupinami ni več pojmovana statično, kot zamrznjena, ločena linija, ki drastično pogojuje in določa ravnanje znotraj lastne krožnice, ampak kot dinamiziran pojav spreminljivih oblik: v ospredju je analiza procesualnosti kot začetna točka raziskovanja odnosov med etničnimi skupinami. V tem smislu izraz mejnosti ne pomeni prvenstveno obstoja politične mejne črte, temveč splet simbolnih razmejevanj, s katerimi si akterji določajo družbeno realiteto.

¹⁶ LeVine in Campbell (1972: 85-99) sta z namenom, da bi omajala tedaj uveljavljene antropološke domneve glede sociokulturnih entitet in njihovih meja, razvrstila, oblikovala in komentirala pet etnografsko novo poudarjenih in dokumentiranih pojavov: 1. ozemeljsko prežemanje med pripadniki različnih etničnih skupnosti; 2. kontinuirano variacijo v kulturnih in jezikovnih značilnostih; 3. nesoglasje o mejah ali oznakah etnične skupnosti; 4. interakcijo preko (meja!) etničnih skupnosti z: a) vojaškimi zvezami (zavezništvi), b) odnosi zafrkavanja in 5. premakljivo etnično identiteto in kulturno opredeljenim življenjskim slogom.

Prav v tej luči so poučne tudi socialnogeografske obravnave meja in obmejnih ozemelj. Raba geografskih konceptov *frontier/boundary* sicer sprva nakazuje, da se koncept *boundary* v politični in družbeni geografiji večinoma navezuje na natančno definirano politično mejo, ki je demarkirana in katere pomen je v tesni povezavi z nastankom suverenih nacionalnih držav, medtem ko je termin *frontier* veliko manj vsebinsko ulovljiv (prim. Kristof 1959: 270). Rešitev bi bila morda v tem, da *frontier* razumemo kot pas ali cono v nasprotju s črto, čeprav je večina klasikov politične geografije s Friedrichom Ratzlom na čelu poudarila potrebo, da tako črto obravnavamo v njenem širšem ozemeljskem kontekstu (prim. Prescott 1978: 29).¹⁷ Zdi se, da se je tako stališče o rabi izrazov pri geografih uveljavilo tudi med antropologi. Pri tem je bil najbolj ekspliciten prav Anthony P. Cohen, saj v zvezi s takimi pojmovanji citira Coakleya:

»Politični geografi so konvencionalno razlikovali med *boundaries*, ki ima natančno, linearno kvaliteto, in *frontiers*, ki ima bolj difuzne, conske konotacije. Koncept *frontier* ima širši družben pomen kot pa bolj restriktiven pravni koncept *boundary*« (Coakley; v: A. P. Cohen 1994b: 62).

V antropološki rabi pa baje zasledimo celo obrnjeno vsebinsko pojmovanje sicer istih terminov: po Coheenu se *boundary* kaže kot termin z najbolj splošno aplikativnostjo, medtem ko za *border* velja situacijska specifičnost; izraz *frontier* pa je rezerviran za strogo omejene geopolitične in pravne rabe (A. P. Cohen 1994b: 63). Kot pravi sam:

»Razlikovanje lahko dosežemo preprosto tako, da *frontiers* in *borders* gledamo kot dejstva, medtem ko so *boundaries* stvar interpretacij, pri katerih vsaj ena stran trdi, da gre za drugačne diakritične lastnosti kot pri drugih« (A. P. Cohen 1994b: 63; poudarki dodani).¹⁸

Zdi se, da ta definicija implicira ključni pomen samopripisa akterjev v položaju mejnosti, kar je ena od temeljnih tez Fredrika Bartha o zamejenosti etnične skupine. Kot nadaljnji pogoj za obstoj mejnosti pa Cohen navaja:

»Mejnost, bodisi da se nanaša na neko kolektivno stanje, tako, kot je identiteta etnične skupine, ali na nekaj tako efemernega, kot je 'osebni prostor', nakazuje spodobnost [*contestability*] in je odvisna od tega, koliko je diakritična lastnost ozaveščena« (A. P. Cohen 1994b: 63).

Naj že na tem mestu preudarim nekatera Cohenova opažanja razlik med antropološko in geografsko rabo konceptov meje. Strinjamo se lahko, da so geografi večinoma rabili termin *boundary* v smislu pravno definirane mejne črte v nasprotju s terminom *frontier*, ki se je nanašal na širši pas ali območja določenih zamejitev. Opozoriti pa velja na naslednje:

Prvič, kot ugotavlja Prescott (1978: 15), je že Ratzel kot eden od začetnikov politične geografije leta 1897 v svojem klasičnem delu *Politische Geographie* opozoril na dinamično – v nasprotju s statično oziroma (do)končno – kvaliteto meje nasploh. To je Prescott pripisal času, v katerem je Ratzel živel in delal: Ratzel je opisoval procese nastajanja Nemčije in ustanavljanja imperijev v Aziji in Afriki. Prav tako naj bi se ukvarjal s praktičnimi potrebami vojaške strategije in s tem v zvezi ugotovil pomembnost močnih obrambnih meja. Čeprav je Ratzel razlikoval med črto in obmejnim pasom in prvi pripisoval pravno resničnost, je hkrati poudarjal, da te črte ne moremo obravnavati zunaj konteksta obmejne pokrajine, kar vsaj posredno dinamizira njegovo razumevanje problema. Pritrditi gre torej Prescottovim poudarkom; kot Cohen tudi on govori o večinski rabi terminologije v geografiji, vendar opozarja tudi na različno, včasih celo sino-

¹⁷ Čeprav je Prescott (1978: 33) ugotavljal, da so geografi uporabljali izraz meja /*frontier*/ v dveh pomenih – kot politično razmejitev med dvema državama ali ločitev med naseljenimi in nenaseljenimi predeli ene države –, je poudaril, da je bila meja v obeh primerih obravnavana kot cona.

¹⁸ »The distinction can be accomplished simply by regarding frontiers and borders as matters of fact, whereas boundaries are the subjects of claim based on a perception by at least one of the parties of certain features which distinguish it from others« (A. P. Cohen 1994b: 63).

¹⁹ Za težko prevedljiv termin kontestabilnost predlagam različni: spodobnost in izzvanost kot oznaki, ki ustrezno, brez kakršnihkoli negativnih konotacij, nakazujeta nestalnost ali nedokončnost kakršnihkoli zamejitev.

nimno, pojmovanje in rabo konceptov, na primer *frontier/boundary* v politični geografiji, pač glede na vsakokratno časovno ozadje preučevalcev mej (Prescott 1978: 29).²⁰

Iz povedanega sledi, da bi veljalo Cohena dopolniti takole: Preučevanje politične meje (*boundary*) se v geografiji ne navezuje izključno na obravnavo meja kot črt, ki so realiteta sama na sebi, ampak jih gre umeščati v širši kontekst obdajajočega območja (prim. Prescott 1978: 29). Še več, po Prescottovih besedah naj bi za moderni geografski diskurz obveljalo obravnavanje politične meje kot zgolj elementa kulturne krajine (*ibid.*: 192).

Drugič, kljub prioritetni domeni v geografskem in mednarodnopravnem diskurzu – preučevanju političnih meja – se v geografskih stališčih o zamejenosti »enotne etnične mase« iz časa nekako med obema vojnama kažejo vzporednice s sodasnimi antropološkimi presojami »etničnega«, ki so ga obravnavali kot nekakšne zamejene ozemelske pakete, različne navzven in homogene navznoter. V tem smislu je dokaj zgovorno in ilustrativno razmišljanje antropološkega klasika, Bronislawa Malinowskega, ko je ugotavljal:

»Etnografski zemljevid sveta na vsakem kontinentu kaže natančno definirane meje, ki ločujejo eno pleme od drugega. Enotnost takega plemena je *de facto* v homogenosti – in občasno v identiteti – kulture [...] Pleme je torej v tem smislu neka skupina ljudi, ki družno uresničujejo neki tip kulture ... To je po mojem mnenju prototip tega, kar danes definiramo kot nacionalnost: velika skupina, enotna v jeziku, tradiciji in kulturi. Delitvi, kot jo najdemo med primitivnimi kulturno razlikujočimi se plemeni, danes ustrezajo delitve, kakršne so med Nemci in Poljaki, Švedi in Norvežani, Italijani in Francozi« (Malinowski; v: LeVine in Campbell 1972: 83).

Prescott ugotavlja, da podobno presojajo pojmovanje etničnega – t. j. kot ločeno zamejene entitete – pisci o mejah iz časa tik pred prvo svetovno vojno, med vojnami in takoj po drugi svetovni vojni, pri čemer ne gre zanemariti dejstva, da so bile tedaj politične meje izrecni predmet preučevanja politične geografije in mednarodnih odnosov (Prescott 1978: 20). Zanimivo je Prescottovo ugibanje, da so mednarodne pravniške zanimali izrazi iz mejnih pogodb, ki so vpletali etnične značilnosti določenega zamejenega ozemlja, čeprav se njihove definicije nanje niso eksplicitno nanašale. Ob tem Prescott ponovno navaja primer polkovnika Holdicha (glej op. 4), ki je ostro zavrnil in skritiziral odlomek L. W. Lydea iz dela *Some Frontiers of Tomorrow: an Aspiration for Europe* iz leta 1915, v katerem slednji spekulira, da bi morale biti meje začrtane skladno z maksimalnim zajemom etnične homogenosti države (Holdich; v: Prescott 1978: 18). Med Lydejeve in Holdichove predloge bi nenazadnje lahko uvrstili zahtevo upokojenega generala in častnega profesorja geografije Münchenske univerze K. Haushoferja leta 1927, ko se je zavzemal, da naj bi vlada vzpostavila kar najbolj trdne meje, ki bi zajemale etnično homogeno populacijo, nosilko nemške *Kultur* (Prescott 1978: 22).²¹

Nepogrešljiv za nadaljnje primerjanje antropološke in geografske konceptualizacije meje (*boundary*) se zdi geograf Boggs, ki ga Prescott (1978: 25) omenja predvsem zaradi dela *International Boundaries: a Study of Boundary Functions and Problems* iz leta 1940. Delo je markantno zato, ker je prvo, ki je skušalo primerjati celo meje med kontinenti. Boggs je izmeril mednarodne meje znotraj vsakega kontinenta in izračunal določena razmerja (kvociente) med celotno mejno dolžino in celotno površino. Dobljeni indeks naj bi omogočal primerjavo med kontinenti. Podobno ambiciozne in vseobsegajoče poskuse razvrstitev in primerjav najdemo v povojnem obdobju tudi med antropologi; največ so se ukvarjali s poskusi popisov »kultur« z vsega sveta. Zgled takega dela je Murdockovo iz leta 1953 z zelo povednim naslovom: *Outline of World Cultures for an Attempt to List All the Cultural Entities Known to Ethnography*.

Vendar politični geografi (podobno kot antropologi) niso ostali pri Boggsovem programu (vse)obsežnih primerjav. In kljub Minghijevi ugotovitvi iz leta 1963, da je bilo tedaj v geografskih mejnih študijah moč opaziti trend preučevanja »away from the nature of the boundary's location and history, to its function

²⁰ Prescott (1978: 18, 28–29) kot ilustrativno navaja preokupacijo polkovnika Holdicha (leta 1916) z močnimi obrambnimi mejami (boundaries), ki jo Prescott pripisuje tako evropskim vojnami med letoma 1914 in 1918 kot tudi Holdichovemu ekstenzivnemu imperialnemu izkustvu v Indiji; sam je namreč sodeloval v številnih komisijah o mejah.

²¹ Zdi se, da je Haushoferjeva in njemu podobna razmišljanja nujno gledati v kontekstu tedanjih razprav o nemštvu (Deutchum).

as it has changed over time« (407), zveni še posebej danes aktualno stališče Stephena B. Jonesa iz leta 1945, po katerem je »vsaka meja enkratna in so zato številne posplošitve dvomljive« (Jones; v: Prescott 1978: 27).

Še en možen Cohenov spregled nemara tiči v zanemarjanju geografskega koncepta obmejne krajine. Minghi (1991: 15) namreč predlaga tako metodologijo, ki bi dopuščala primerjalno preučevanje dveh ali več meja, hkrati pa bi analizirala obmejno krajino v njenem časovnem izseku. Tak način bi še vedno dopuščal obravnavo meja na pionirski političnogeografski način, t. j. kot črt, ki označujejo kraj nacionalnega prostora, hkrati pa kot obmejnih ploskev, ki ločujejo nacionalne enote. Temu ustrezno je predlagal nekoliko protislovno opredeljen koncept obmejnega ozemlja kot razločujočega območja, ki ga oblikuje meja, pri čemer naj bi element delitve prav tako pomenil sredstvo definicije regije. Tako bi postale značilnosti prebivanja ob meji poglavitni oblikovalec kulturne krajine, ki jo hkrati meja tudi opredeljuje. Po Minghiju bi se potemtakem analiza morala osredotočati na kulturno krajino meje oziroma obmejno ozemlje (Minghi 1991: 15). Vključevanje procesualnosti tako v prostorskem kot v časovnem smislu (Minghi govori o *cultural landscape of border in temporal setting*; 1991: 15) je pomembna značilnost modernega geografskega diskurza o mejah, ki ga približuje modernemu antropološkemu konceptu mejnosti. Obema je namreč prav zaradi osredotočanja na dogajanje tudi izpod očitnih razločevalcev dveh entitet (na primer državnopravne demarkacijske črte) in upoštevanja tudi perspektive prebivalcev, ki ob meji živijo (prim. Rumley in Minghi 1991: 4), imanentna vsakokrat spremenljiva določitev obsega obmejne lokacije.

Dejstvo, da je velika večina študij o mejah v politični geografiji, mednarodnem pravu itn. nastala prav v vojnih ali konfliktnih obdobjih, je Minghija spodbudilo, da je geografe pozval k bolj pozornemu preučevanju *harmoničnih (mejnih) situacij* (1991: 17, 18), v katerih naj bi še bolj izstopala omenjena zahteva po preučevanju meje v kontekstu obmejne pokrajine. V nasprotju s tradicionalnimi političnogeografskimi preučevanji meja predvsem v konfliktnih situacijah naj bi bila meja tokrat obravnavana v nekonfliktnih situacijah.²²

Sam termin obmejno ozemlje ni nov: Stephen Jones ga je uporabil že leta 1937 v naslovu svojega članka²³ o delu meje med Kanado in ZDA. Bolj presenetljivo je, da je že takrat ugotovil, da *kulturne razliknosti* obmejnoozemeljske cone ne obstajajo iz razlogov narave kulture kot take, ampak da jih *prej povzročajo obstoj meje* (Jones; v: Minghi in Rumley 1991: 2; poudarki dodani). Podobno je Platt leta 1958 izpeljal zanimiv izsledek v študiji, ki sta jo z Bucking-Spitto opravila na kosu nizozemsko-nemške meje:²⁴

»Pokrajino in posest sva našla podobno na obeh straneh. Meja ni naravna in ne ločuje razlikujočih se enotnih regij. Lahko jo premaknemo na vzhod ali zahod, ne da bi spremenili splošni videz stvari na obeh straneh [...], čeprav so lahko oblike prostorske organizacije na obeh straneh podobne, so same organizacije in njihove enote, politične, ekonomske in družbene, kot so se razvile v dolgih letih človeške dejavnosti, v glavnem razločene. Premik meje v katerokoli smer zmoti organizacijo v majhnih in velikih enotah na obeh straneh in sploh povzroči škodo, ki jo je mogoče le počasi, če sploh kdaj, popraviti« (Platt in Bucking-Spitta; v: Prescott 1978: 196–197).

Nekoliko zapozneno in naivno pa se zdi opažanje Johna Augellija, ki je za otok Hispaniola vzdolž obmejnega ozemlja med Dominikansko republiko in Haitijem celo ugotavljal (1980), da »obmejna ozemlja [...] zgodovinsko težijo k temu, da postanejo cone kulturnega prekrivanja in politične nestabilnosti, kjer sta nacionalna identiteta in lojalnost ljudi pogosto zabrisani« (Augelli; v: Minghi in Rumley 1991: 3). Na avtomatičnost temu podobnih razmišljanj je dobro opozoril na primer Robert Mínnich v svoji študiji o Kanalski dolini v Italiji, ugotavljajoč, da situacije, ko državne meje arbitrarno ločijo ljudi, ne povzročijo zmede v identiteti teh ljudi: »Starejši prebivalci Kanalske doline so v moji navzočnosti dostikrat potožili, da 'govorijo svoje domače narečje (t. j. narečje slovenščine), da so po srcu Korošci, usojeno pa jim je živeti v Italiji'«

²² Zanimivo je, da je Minghi sprožil tovrstno sugestijo že leta 1963, ko je zapisal: »More attention to the 'normal' situation is needed in boundary research. Therefore, while the discussion in this paper has centered more on studies concerning boundary disputes and changes, the author believes that the studies falling in the other categories have served as important supplements to boundary science« (Minghi 1963: 427).

²³ The Cordilleran Section of the Canadian-United States borderland.

²⁴ Naslov študije je: A Geographical Study of the Dutch-German Border.

(Minnich 1993: 92). Morda se zdijo identitete zabrisane, če jih mislimo z vidika državne logike, ki ima natančno kodificirana in hkrati zelo ekskluzivna pravila, kdo je ali ni pripadnik določene nacije ali pa njen državljan. To pa ne pomeni avtomatično, da imajo ljudje, ki živijo v za državo težko natančno definiranih situacijah, zabrisane identitete. Kot že rečeno, so bila taka opažanja in ugotavljanja značilna za novo evidenco terenskega preučevanja družboslovcev, tudi socialnih antropologov, v šestdesetih letih, ki je pogojevala odločilen preobrat v preučevanju identitet, etničnosti in lojalnosti s poudarjeno problematiko mejnosti oziroma s preusmeritvijo pozornosti od statičnih kolektivitet k njihovim dinamičnim (odkritim in prikritim) mejam. Prav tako je bilo problematizirano avtomatično obravnavanje kolektivnih identitet, ki so jih utemeljevali z institucionalnim razumevanjem, pri čemer pa so prezrli ali pa zanemarili *samorazumevanje* preučevanih ljudi, ki implicira problematiziranje samega identitetnega upravljanja (*identity management*).

Petič, velja se pomuditi pri razlogih, zakaj vlada nezanimanje za klasične geografske obmejnoozemeljske študije pri družboslovcih v drugih disciplinah: Minghi in Rumley (1991: 3–4) vidita pglaviten razlog za tako stanje v neizdelanosti teorije obmejnih ozemelj; to utemeljujeta s pionirsko geografsko evidenco enkratnih deskriptivnih in klasifikatornih primerov mejnih študij, v katerih je umanjala obravnava časovnosti. Tako zožen pristop sta avtorja prepoznala tudi v ukvarjanju s pretežno fizičnimi artefakti (npr. mejnimi označbami). – Šele v osemdesetih letih so se kulturni geografi začeli bolj intenzivno ukvarjati s simbolnimi kvalitetai krajin, pri čemer so vse bolj poudarjali pripisane družbene in politične pomene. Tako je geograf John House izrecno predlagal, naj se študije obmejnih ozemelj preusmerijo od obsedenosti z vidno funkcijo k obravnavi obmejnege ozemlja kot spleta vrste kulturnih, ekonomskih in političnih interakcij in k družbenim procesom, ki se dogajajo v prostoru (House; v: Minghi in Rumley 1991: 4). Minghi in Rumley (1991: 4) pa sta predlagala celo tak primerjalni pristop, ki bi obravnaval obmejno ozemlje v perspektivi dotikajočih se držav in njenih prebivalcev.

Sklep

Če povzamemo razmišljanja o razmerju med antropološko in geografsko rabo terminov *border*, *frontier*, *boundary*, bi lahko rekli, da sta tradiciji obravnav enakih terminov gotovo različni, vendar lahko znotraj geografske tradicije opazimo nastavke, ki so opozarjali na bolj premišljeno in konceptualno bolj zastavljeno terminologijo, kot jim jo je priznal Cohen. Tako bi težko pritrdili njegovi razlagi, da je v geografiji koncept *boundary* rezerviran izključno za obravnavo politične meje, saj je že klasik Ratzel opozarjal na obravnavo politične meje le v navezavi na kontekst obmejne pokrajine. Slednje lahko razumemo kot odpiranje k problemom, ki presegajo zgolj pravno resničnost in nekako silijo na področja, ki jih skuša zajeti geografski koncept *frontier*. Kljub temu drži, da so geografi termin *boundary* večinoma rabili za politične meje: mednarodnopravna in političnogeografska perspektiva sta si v prvih desetletjih tega stoletja prizadevali predvsem za jasno razmejitev in zamejitev »etnično homogenih enot«, lahko bi celo špekulirali, po evropskem vzoru. – Problem koncizne rabe terminov se je še naprej kristaliziral ob geografskih razpravah o obmejnih ozemljih: tako kot antropologi so tudi geografi ob študijah obmejnih ozemelj vse bolj spoznavali, da so kulturne različnosti mejnih območij pogojene z obstojem (politične) meje in da niso naravno dejstvo; celo tako, da se zdi, kot da obmejna ozemlja zgodovinsko težijo h kulturnemu prekrivanju in politični nestabilnosti in da je opredeljevanje nacionalne identitete in politične ter drugih lojalnosti ljudi zelo zapleten problem.

Če se po vsem povedanem vrnemo h Cohenovi začetni razpravi o sorodnih izrazih *border*, *boundary*, *frontier* v antropološki rabi, vidimo, da je mejnost (*boundary*) med njimi pomensko najširše razprta, obravnavana kot zadeva zavesti, ki je močno obremenjena z izmuzljivostjo in zabrisanostjo simbolov, medtem ko izraza *frontier* in *border* odlikuje »taksonomična absolutnost antropoloških kategorij« (1994: 70); tako naj bi se izrazu mejnost (*boundary*) priličila značilnost neskončnosti, nejasnosti in posledično možnega spodbijanja njenih pomenov, medtem ko kvalificirata *frontier* in *border* končnost in določnost. In prav sposobnost analize spodbojnosti kolektivnih identitet tudi na ravni posameznika je tisto, kar odlikuje koncept mejnosti, če ga analitično jemljemo kot zadevo zavesti in ne usmerjamo raziskovalnega pogleda na vnaprej zamejene entitete. Ali, če zaključimo s Cohenom:

»Gledano zgodovinsko, je antropologija privilegirala kolektivno in dogmatsko in zanemarila individualno in izkustveno ... Zaradi tega se nismo mogli spopasti s pomeni meja [*boundaries*]. Namesto tega smo jih izumili kot pomembne« (A. P. Cohen 1994b: 72).