



RESEARCH PAPER

Evolution of Borders and Borderlands: A Historical Overview

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ABSTRACT

Borders and borderlands concept was found from the very beginning of human society. In early period of time borders demarcation was physical like rivers, mountains, forest etc but with passage of time it converted to lines. The study throws light on those historical events that played great role in the formation of borders. The paper scrutinize the policies of Colonial powers in the borderlands of Asia and Africa where they were completely ignorant from the nature of these societies who lived over borderland and their policies of utilizing these colonies as raw material for their industrialization. The decisive treaties of Westphalia and Paris accord has been discussed as main event that played role in the formation of borders. The emergence of nation states and increasing of borders has been highlighted. The paper concludes that borders and borderlands possessed great importance in the state politics and world political scenario as they are the main source of connection between people, societies, culture, civilizations of the states. The prevention of crimes, smuggling and illegal movement of goods and people could be controlled by effective border management control.

Introduction

Borders are the lines that separate areas, counties, states; provinces, towns etc and it could be real or made up by people as well. The borders define a particular area that the government of the region controls and apply laws in it. Borders may be changed as people of one area take over another area or land traded or after war governments divided it. A lot of complications and problems are available in the meanings of borders, frontiers and borderlands because of lack of conceptual consensus. But in simple terms border is an international boundary line and boundary is a separation indicating some partition in spatial terms. When borders are seen as a zone or region it is called a borderland. Borderlands are different from

frontiers in respect of zone that is the latter is typically and exclusively refers to historical specified boundary.(www.encyclopedia.com, 2020)

Generally borders and borderlands are considered as distribution between cultures, languages, political and confessional systems and are widely recognized as complex multilayer and multileveled social and human psychological phenomena that were not the case in the past. In the early period of time they were not viewed as straight line that marked territory or political authority. It was the Roman who divides the classical Roman Civilization from the unlawful Barbarians by constructing a wall to clearly define the line of division. By the middle ages most of the Europe has no clear boundaries and they traded like chattels and the identification of borders and precise territories were ambiguous and belonged to rulers and churches. With the invention of mapping technologies by the geographer's boundaries and frontiers division progressively developed.

The landmark event that shaped the borders and borderlands tremendously and gave it the modern political order was the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 who established boundaries of England, Germany, France, Netherland, Spain, Poland Turkey, Muscovy, Sweden etc and give emergence to the era of nation-state. And after that Treaty of Paris of 1919 who reviewed the borders after WW-I is also significant. The paper has attempted to give an overview to those historical events that shaped current borders and borderlands. From the Greek notion to the emergence of nation's states the history of borders has been analyzed. The current significance of borders in this globalized world has also been conceptualized.

History of Borders

Defense of the territories are traced back from the hunters communities who protect it without materially making definite limits: even in between the hostile tribes wide respect were there for areas of 'no men' s land. Everyone was aware that approaching'no men' s land is dangerous and deadly. With passage of time when the broad areas becomes thinner, the contacts and trade did not exclude from these areas and they become exchange areas for neighboring tribes. In ancient period the main attempt to transform frontier into borders were in the 7th century BC of emperor Qinshi, s great wall while on the West the main border activity come to the front from Roman Empire. Another important activity was the no man land of semi desert between Mongol and Chinese empire (Bellezza, 2013).

The history of borderlands are roughly traced back from 3500 B.C.E when the Samarians asserted their control over the Alluvial lands of the Tigris and Euphrates by peaceful and sometimes violent contacts with rural immigrant to their West, where Savannas amalgamated into the immense Arabian desert, and to the north and east where the plains abutted up against the wooded foothills of the Taurus and Zagros mountains. The mutual interaction between these lowland settled people and upland herders where their life ways was so different produced the first borderland.(Mears, 2001)

Concept of Borders in Ancient Greek and Roman Period

The Greek notion about borders and borderlands were very complex and self-contradictory as Greeks are silent that how borders create, define and maintain citizenship. But the Greek poleis had a conception of borders as they clearly demarcated lines as separating politics from each other by borders. These borders sprint through mountains, valleys, gorges, rivers and flat land etc. disputes about borderlands were there which resolution has evidences land near borders and its rights of use were there in the Greek era. But besides these the access to land ownership and resources like cultivated land, pasturage, quarries and mines and other precious possessions were restricted to citizens or those person who has given citizenship right so the Greek poleis has maintained an exclusive authority over the entire land of their Chora. So the concept of firm boundaries was not only physical but ideological as well and we could relate it to those borders that were maintained after peace of Westphalia.(Reger, 2017)

In Ancient Rome border was the concept of separation between two spaces of delimiting the city (*Res publica*) which is not a state first. The delimiting of spaces for constructing cities (*Limes*) were both physical (natural borders like mountains and rivers) and symbolic as these boundaries creates frames and shapes communities of citizens and areas for law. But these were applied to an internal level and there were no international borders and the aim of this *Respublica* was only to submit the entire inhabited world to its power and law. In the beginning of the Empire Rome faced fierce Barbarians who create difficulties for the *Res publica* and Rome sets its limits built a border in shape of wall with towers, scout patrolling and soldiers who were controlling the frontiers. A change come to the front in 212 when citizenship was provided to all the inhabitants of the empire and on one side of the region there was Legal Romans called *Romania* and on the other space was for the Barbarian where they dwelt were called *Barbaria*. In the 4th-5th century the Romans were living under the rule of law, state and the Barbarians on other side were unaware of the term law. The space was not of the both sides but the main purpose was to protect the civilized Roman from the fierce Barbarians and this Zone was just like buffer Zone and with passage of time new forms of culture, practices, law appeared on this intermediate zone (Kerneis, 2018)

The wall that was constructed by the Romans for creating boundary and border was 120 KM from the mouth of Tyne river (West) and the Solvary Firth (East), indicating the Limes Britannicus. And after twenty years another wall of 150 KM name Antonnie wall was built.(Bellezza, 2013)

Borders Notion in Medieval Age

Throughout the middle ages there were no borders at all in the Europe. People traveled constantly as their mental world was not limited to locality only. The Jewish merchants, the Muslims pilgrims and the Christian monks travelled thousands of miles back and forth between the Christen and Islamic territories. In

these pre-modern times communities were defined by people not geography. It was the emperor in these medieval ages that exerted power. It would be the final decision of the ruler that decides different geographic spaces.(Gabriele, 2018) A great size of Europe population was bound in particular place and traded like chattels. The cities and chattels at those times were to some extent their borderlands that were too ambiguous. The borders have no definition in terms of precise area. In Renaissance time of period the free movements of the people was downplayed by the rulers and the people were considering now as valuable workforce for the state that should be kept within the territories of the country and these sort of acts give birth to the ideas of nationalism. With the developing of nationalism it became useful for a state to keep various cultures loyal to the state and that is why that France and Spain expel a lot of religious communities from their states.(Laine, 2015)

Treaty of Westphalia affects on the Recognition of Borders

The treaty of Westphalia in 1648 not only ended a long war among the European powers but also created a framework for modern international relations. The origin of modern international concepts like state sovereignty, diplomacy, negotiations for resolving conflicts and mediations between states are lies in this milestone accord. The outstanding features of the agreements were the ending of thirty years war (1618-1648) that was a conflict between the Catholics and Protestant in the Great Roman Empire and another eighty year war between Netherlands and Spain. The treaty revolutionary changed the relation between Church and state and established a precedent that states would be sovereign entities and have immunity from the political pressure of orthodoxy. According to the treaty it was *legitimate form of solving conflicts before the peace, but after the treaties were agreed upon, no state was allowed to be destroyed and compensation was to be awarded to these states that gave up strategically advantageous possessions*” (Patton, 2019).

The treaty defines “the condition under which state could acquire valid title to territory either by discovery, cessation and annexation.” The treaty has established the territorial state as the basic unit of international system.(Okhonmina, 2017)The treaty has been credited that it provide foundation to the modern state system and eloquent the concept of territorial sovereignty by granting territories or confirm sovereignty of territories to a number of states like Sweden, France, Netherland, Switzerland, England, Germany, Turkey, Spain. Before and during the war German territories were under the authority of the Holy Roman Emperor but territorial superior authority was granted to these areas in all matters under the treaty. Many international authors in the field of history and international relations considered the treaty as model for the birth of America, and the modern relations of European nations and for creating Nation of League and United Nations.(Patton, 2019)

Another important real spark in the evolution of border formation was the introduction of democracy after French and American revolutions in the late eighteenth century. The emergence of nations-states with democracy gave rise to

popular legitimacy or sovereignty that state is created and sustained by the consent of the people. Along with nationalism democratic values signify that territory should be not molded in national space separated by borders only rather it should be enclose to population as well for separate and particular culture. These sort of things contributed to the phenomenon of nations equivalency of society and borders demarcation progressively become a social phenomenon as well.(Laine, 2015)

Concept of Borders in Colonial Period

Europeans colonialist like Great Britain, France, Netherlands etc were curious to take full or partial control over the other societies and territories of Asia, Africa and Latin America to found them their colonies, occupied their settlers and resources and exploited them economically after the industrial revolution .Their primary interest was maintaining favorable trade zones along the coasts and rivers but they shifted it towards controlling territories and populations. Many territorial boundaries were created in the result of the mutual competition of these colonial powers after capturing the people, territories and resources of theses continents. From the colonial standpoint, boundaries were considered to confine and restrict trade and movement of people across the inter-colonial borders to endorse activities like taxation, road construction and resource extraction (Horstmann, 2018).

The colonial powers dealt with the borders, borderlands, local leaders and chieftaincies with different strategies and techniques that transformed borderlands tremendously especially in Africa and Asia that put altogether different impacts over these areas. Colonization process greatly distorted borderlands for achieving their purposes and the subsequent changes in these borderlands has influenced these territories socially, culturally, politically and economically. For example in Africa the colonial masters underhand methods in territorial attainment and boundary making such as deception, fraud, coercion and bribery. They influence the African leaders for obtaining rich resources lands and in Berlin Conference they legitimized African Division by providing regional maps without giving any notification.(Gashaw, 2017)

Decisive treaty of Paris 1763

This milestone treaty not only ended the seven years war between the France and Great Britain along with their respective allies but also play a decisive role to changed the rivalry for north America from a three-cornered struggle. According to the treaty France gave up all its territories in mainland North America and brought to an end a peaceful way to not threaten the British colonies there. France lost its possessions on the North American continent by ceding Canada and all its territories east of the Mississippi to England and by yielding W, Louisiana to Spain in compensations for Florida which Spain ceded to United Kingdom. The treaty also allowed the French to return to their posts in East India without maintaining troops or building forts in Bengal. So practically India was passed to England while in Africa Senegal were handed over to Great Britain. The treaty was the inauguration of an age of British supremacy outside Europe and end of French empire in North

America as most of the territories were restored to their original owners in the agreement. Overall the accord ended the continental conflict with no considerable changes in pre-war borders.(Trautsch, 2018)

Decolonization and the Emergence of newly Independent States after WW-I and II

The process of decolonization started from World War-I and up to 1939 when WW-II begun significant territories had got independence but decolonization concluded rapidly from 1945-1960 in most of the Asian and African regions. In 1945 the UN was consisted of 51 member states but its membership increased to 76 till 1955 and its strength reached to 117 states up to 1965. The vast majority of these newly independent states came into being because of decolonization.(Collins, 2015)

If the history of borders in Southeast Asia is analyzed we find that dramatically change comes after the result of WW-II and Japanese occupation in this region. From 1945 to 1960s most of the European powers left this region and nations states replaced the colonial empires while the boundary system that were drawn in the colonial era were remain intact but the these states struggled with ethnic and separatist or regional forces to maintain control over territories that were given to them under international law. The decolonization period became generally important for the borders of this region to grow.(Lee, 2011)

Conceptualizing Borders in globalizing world and international relations

The concept of borders today in this globalized world is more significant and complex than ever. Today in international relations states and its borders are the main actors in the transnational political and economic processes. Today borders are multi-dimensional, ambiguous and contradictory. They are not only demarcations between states but have tremendous implications for trade, population mobility, connection and security and so many others areas. In current international scenario borders nations are confronted complex and multifaceted security challenges both in physical borders as well as with the traditional sovereignty of the country. Borders are considered as symbol of identity and serve the purpose of barriers, bridges, resources and means of communication for the concerned states. International borders are linear points of contacts between countries, cultures and societies that give prospects to examine the best and the worst in human nature and the exercise of statecraft. Both conflicts and cooperation in the borderlands of the two countries provide an opportunities of insights for the solution of various problems that today world community is facing throughout the world. The various challenges today in these borderlands like illegal movements of people and goods, crime increasing ratio, smuggling are not in the interest of any country and tools of effective border management is in dire need (Adesina, 2019).

Conclusion

The study argues that current frontiers, borders and borderlands that we seen today are the result of long historical evolutionary process which could be

traced from hunter communities. From the Greek era its recognition in world and state politics were present but it were the Roman who provide clear-cut demarcations to state borders by constructing walls against their enemies the Barbarians. By the Middle ages Europeans were still unaware of the importance of borders and have ambiguous borders and borderlands. During the early renaissance time the developing of national ideologies paved the way for the demarcation of borders but it was the decisive accord of Westphalia 1648 who shaped borders and borderland tremendously. Beside the treaty the mutual competition for resources among the Colonial powers of Europe who captured the Asia, Africa and Latin America brought drastic changes to these borderlands of the various continents. The treaty of Paris of 1763 and various other historical events about borders among these colonial masters abruptly disturbed the borders. The decolonization paved the way smoothly for the emergence of nation states and ultimately borders on the world globe increase significantly. Today borders are considered widely as complex social phenomena related to the fundamental organization of society and human psychology and are the main links between societies, cultures, populations of the two countries.

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