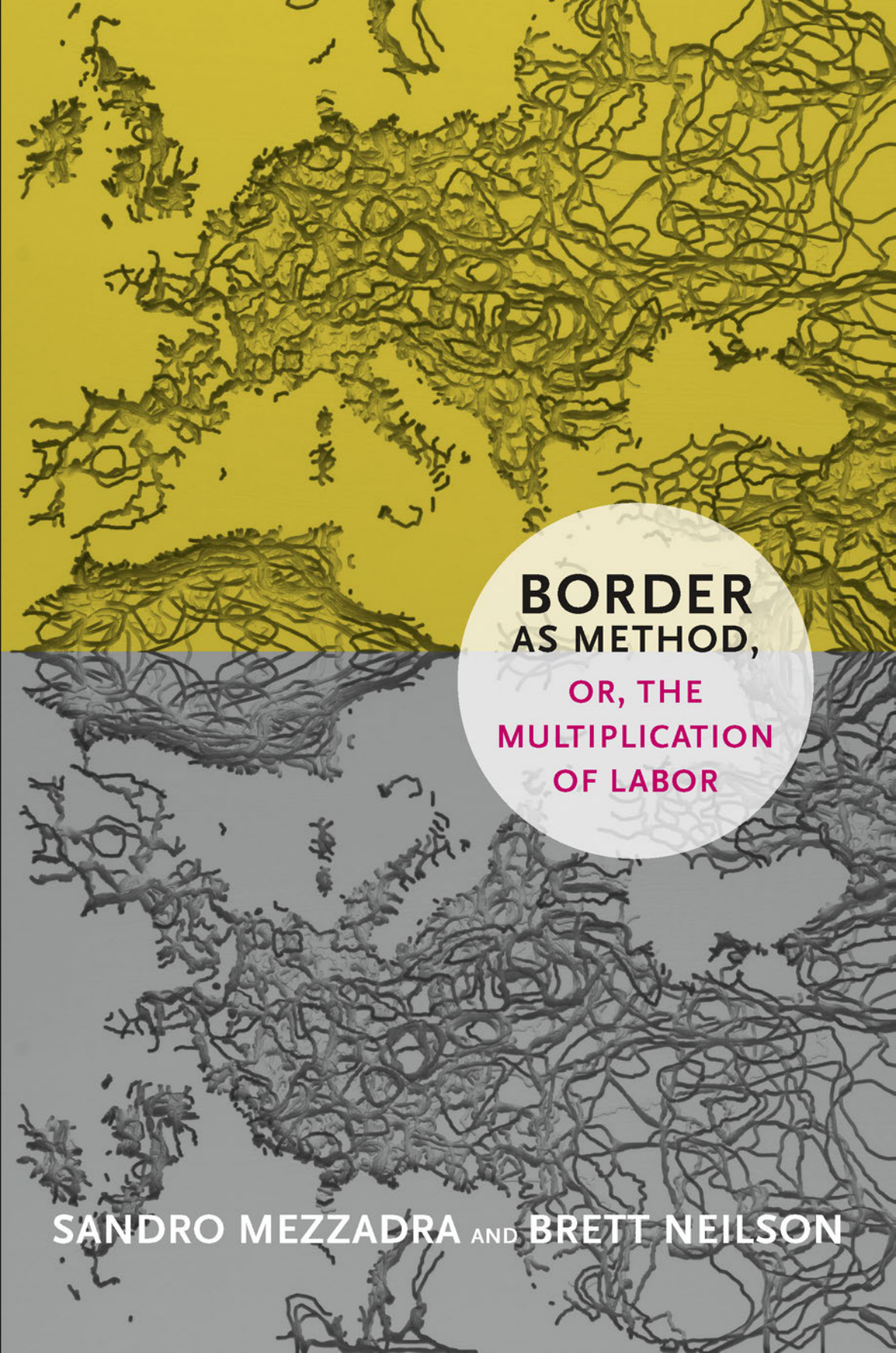

BORDER AS METHOD,

OR, THE MULTIPLICATION OF LABOR

SANDRO MEZZADRA AND BRETT NEILSON

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SOCIAL TEXT BOOKS

Edited for the collective by
Brent Edwards, Randy Martin,
Andrew Ross, and Ella Shohat

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SANDRO MEZZADRA
AND BRETT NEILSON

Duke University Press
Durham and London
2013

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Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper ∞
Designed by Heather Hensley
Typeset in Warnock Pro by Keystone

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Mezzadra, Sandro.
Border as method, or, the multiplication of labor /
Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson.
p. cm. — (Social text books)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-8223-5487-1 (cloth : alk. paper)
ISBN 978-0-8223-5503-8 (pbk. : alk. paper)
1. Boundaries. 2. Borderlands. I. Neilson, Brett. II. Title.
JC323.M49 2013
320.1′2—dc23 2013010105

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PREFACE

Fog and dirt, violence and magic have surrounded the tracing and institution of borders since late antiquity. Sources from around the world tell us wonderful and frightening stories about the tracing of demarcation lines between the sacred and the profane, good and evil, private and public, inside and outside. From the liminal experiences of ritual societies to the delimitation of land as private property, from the fratricide of Remus by Romulus at the mythological foundation of Rome to the expansion of the imperial *limes*, these stories speak of the *productive* power of the border—of the strategic role it plays in the fabrication of the world. They also convey, in a glimpse, an idea of the deep heterogeneity of the semantic field of the border, of its complex symbolic and material implications. The modern cartographical representation and institutional arrangement of the border as a line—first in Europe and then globalized through the whirlwind of colonialism, imperialism, and anticolonial struggles—has somehow obscured this complexity and led us to consider the border as literally marginal. Today, we are witnessing a deep change in this regard. As many scholars have noted, the border has inscribed itself at the center of contemporary experience. We are confronted not only with a multiplication of different types of borders but also with the reemergence of the deep heterogeneity of the semantic field of the border. Symbolic, linguistic, cultural, and urban boundaries are no longer articulated in fixed ways by the geopolitical border. Rather, they overlap, connect, and disconnect in often unpredictable ways, contributing to shaping new forms of domination and exploitation.

Violence undeniably shapes lives and relations that are played out on and across borders worldwide. Think of the often unreported deaths of migrants

challenging borders in the deserts between Mexico and the United States or in the choppy waters of the Mediterranean Sea. New and old forms of war continue to target vast borderlands. Think of Waziristan, Kashmir, Palestine. This book was born out of indignation and struggles, particularly migrants' struggles, against such violence and war at the border. As our research and writing proceeded, we also learned (once again, particularly from migrants) to valorize the capacities, skills, and experiences of border crossing, of organizing life across borders. Literal and metaphorical practices of translation have come to be more associated in our minds with the proliferation of borders and border struggles in the contemporary world. Although this proliferation of borders, as we have stressed, is deeply implicated in the operation of old and new devices of dispossession and exploitation, we contend that it is precisely from this point of view that struggles revolving around borders and practices of translation crisscrossing them can play a key role in fostering the debate on the politics of the common. This book can be partially read as a contribution to this debate, in which we see some of the most promising conditions for the reinvention of a project of liberation in the global present.

In the past few years, we have become increasingly uncomfortable with the fixation in many critical border studies as well as activist circles on the image of the wall. This does not mean we do not recognize the importance of the worldwide spread of walls just a few decades after the celebration of the fall of the Berlin wall. But independent of the fact that many walls are far less rigid than they pretend to be, taking the wall as the paradigmatic icon of contemporary borders leads to a unilateral focus on the border's capacity to exclude. This can paradoxically reinforce the spectacle of the border, which is to say the ritualized display of violence and expulsion that characterizes many border interventions. The image of the wall can also entrench the idea of a clear-cut division between the inside and the outside as well as the desire for a perfect integration of the inside. As we show in this book, taking the border not only as a research "object" but also as an "epistemic" angle (this is basically what we mean by "border as method") provides productive insights on the tensions and conflicts that blur the line between inclusion and exclusion, as well as on the profoundly changing code of social inclusion in the present. At the same time, when we speak of the importance of border crossing, we are aware that this moment in the operation of borders is important not just from the point of view of subjects in transit. The same is true for states, global political actors, agencies of governance, and capital. Sorting and filtering flows, commodities, labor, and information that hap-

pens at borders are crucial for the operation of these actors. Again, taking the border as an epistemic angle opens up new and particularly productive perspectives on the transformations currently reshaping power and capital—for instance, shedding light on the intermingling of sovereignty and governmentality and on the logistical operations underlying global circuits of accumulation.

Our work on borders is to be read in this sense as a contribution to the critical investigation of actually existing global processes. Gone are the days in which a book like *The Borderless World*, published in 1990 by Japanese management guru Kenichi Ōmae, could set the agenda for the discussion on globalization and borders. The idea presented there of a zero-sum game between globalization and borders (insofar as globalization progresses, the relevance of borders will be diminished) has been very influential but has been rapidly displaced by evidence of the increasing presence of borders in our present. Although our work charts this process of multiplication of borders, our argument is not that the nation-state has been untouched by globalization. We concur with many thinkers who have argued that the nation-state has been reorganized and reformatted in the contemporary world. This leads us to focus not only on traditional international borders but also on other lines of social, cultural, political, and economic demarcation. For instance, we investigate the boundaries circumscribing the "special economic zones" that proliferate within formally united political spaces in many parts of the world.

To repeat, one of our central theses is that borders, far from serving merely to block or obstruct global passages of people, money, or objects, have become central devices for their articulation. Borders play a key role in the production of the heterogeneous time and space of contemporary global and postcolonial capitalism. This focus on the deep heterogeneity of the global is one of the distinguishing points we make, in a constant dialogue with many anthropological and ethnographic works as well as with social and political thinkers. Subjects in motion and their experiences of the border provide a kind of thread that runs through the nine chapters of the volume. We analyze the evolving shape of border and migration regimes in different parts of the world, looking at the way these regimes concur in the production of labor power as a commodity. At the same time we focus on the long-term problem of relations between the expanding frontiers of capital and territorial demarcations within the history of modern capitalism, conceived of as a world system since its inception. We are convinced that in the current global transition, under the pressure of capital's financialization,

there is a need to test some of the most cherished notions and theoretical paradigms produced by political economy and social sciences to come to grips with that problem—from the international division of labor to center and periphery. Again, taking the point of view of the border, we propose a new concept—the multiplication of labor—and we attempt to map the very geographical disruption that lies at the core of capitalist globalization. *Border as Method* can therefore also be read as an attempt to contribute to the ongoing discussion on the evolving shape of the world order and disorder.

Our emphasis on heterogeneity is also important for the analysis of what we call with Karl Marx the composition of contemporary living labor, which is more and more crisscrossed, divided, and multiplied by practices of mobility and the operation of borders. To gain an analytical purchase on these processes we interlace multiple gazes and voices, crossing and challenging the North–South divide. While we stress the relevance of migration experiences and control regimes from the point of view of the transformations of labor in the Euro-Atlantic world, intervening in the discussion on care and affective labor as well as precarity, we also focus, to make a couple of examples, on the *hukou* system of household registration in contemporary China and the complex systems of bordering that internally divide the Indian labor market. We are aware of many differences that must be taken into account in doing this. We do not propose a comparative analysis of these and other instances. We are interested in another kind of knowledge production, one that starts from concepts and works on the (often unexpected) resonances and dissonances produced by the encounters and clashes between these concepts and a materiality that can be very distant from the one within which they were originally formulated. This is part and parcel of what we call border as method. In the case of the composition of living labor, it points to the strategic relevance of heterogeneity (of, for example, figures, skills, legal and social statuses) across diverse geographical scales. Nowadays, multiplicity is the necessary point of departure for any investigation of the composition of labor, and *Border as Method* attempts to provide some tools for identifying the points of more intense conflict and friction where such an investigation can focus. Although multiplicity and heterogeneity are cut and divided by devices of control and hierarchization, it is no less true today that unity is strength (to use words that marked an epoch in the history of class struggle). But the conditions of this unity have to be fully reimagined against the background of a multiplicity and heterogeneity that must be turned from an element of weakness into an element of strength.

It will not be surprising that our work on borders leads us to engage in a

discussion with some of the most influential elaborations on the topic of political subjectivity circulating in current critical debates. Borders in modernity have played a constitutive role in the modes of production and organization of political subjectivity. Citizenship is probably the best example of this, and it is only necessary to reflect on the important connection between citizenship and labor in the twentieth century to grasp the ways the movements of the dyadic figure of the citizen-worker have been inscribed within the national confines of the state. Working through citizenship studies, labor studies, as well as more philosophical debates on political subjectivity, we map the tensions and ruptures that crisscross the contemporary figures of both the citizen and the worker. The borders circumscribing these figures have become blurred and unstable, and, to reference a slogan of Latinos in the United States ("we did not cross the border, the border crossed us"), they are themselves increasingly crossed and cut, more than circumscribed, by borders. Around these borders, although often far away from the literal border, some of the most crucial struggles of the present are fought. Liberating political imagination from the burden of the citizen-worker and the state is particularly urgent to open up spaces within which the organization of new forms of political subjectivity becomes possible. Here, again, our work on borders encounters current debates on translation and the common.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book has been a long time in gestation, and there are too many people to thank for their questions, support, provocations, and readings. The distance at which we live has been a productive factor in our approach to borders and in our desire to write a book that was truly global in scope. Practically, however, the experience of collaboration and research has required travel, and for supporting this we acknowledge a number of sources: the University of Western Sydney Professional Development Scheme, the University of Western Sydney Eminent Visitor Scheme, and the Australian Research Council Discovery Project Scheme (DP0988547).

Along the way we have presented our work to many audiences. The feedback on these occasions has been vital to the development of our thinking. In particular, we are thankful for invitations to speak at the Franklin Humanities Institute, Duke University; the Collège International de Philosophie, Paris; the Centre for the Study of Invention and Social Process, Goldsmiths College, London; the Institut für Soziologie, University of Hamburg; the Department of Media, Culture and Creative Industries, King's College London; the School of Culture and Communication, University of Melbourne; the Research Institute of Comparative History and Culture, Hanyang University, Seoul; the European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policy, Vienna; the Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata; the Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford University; the Universidad Nacional de San Martín, Buenos Aires; the Tate Modern Gallery, London; the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Lisbon; the Institute of International Visual Arts (Rivington Place), London; the Haute École d'Art et de Design, Geneva; and the Centro de Estudios Sobre la Identidad Colectiva, Universidad del País Vasco, Bilbao.

These invitations have been balanced by an intense engagement with migrant and activist groups, among them the Frassanito Network, the Cross-border Collective, the Uninomade Network, and Colectivo Situaciones.

Arguments herein have been foreshadowed in articles published in the journals *Transversal* and *Theory, Culture & Society*. A book chapter in *Borders of Justice* (edited by Étienne Balibar, Ranabir Samaddar, and Sandro Mezzadra, Temple University Press, 2011) anticipates some of the arguments presented in chapters 5, 6, and 8. Sections of chapters 2 and 3 have been published in a slightly altered version in the journal *Scapegoat: Architecture/Landscape/Political Economy*. Earlier versions of parts of chapter 6 appeared in the journal *Global/Local: Identity, Community, Security*. Thanks to the editors and reviewers on all occasions.

In writing this book we have drawn on many works unavailable in the English language. Translations from these texts are ours. We have also used quotation marks when using the term "illegal" to describe migrants. We have followed this practice for terms such as "boat people" and "people smugglers." This is part of an effort to denaturalize these widespread categorizations as well as the anxieties and phobias that frequently accompany their use.

We owe a special thanks to Anja Kanngieser for her research assistance, bibliographic work, and deep understanding of the argument and politics that animate this book. Other friends and colleagues we want to thank are Rutvica Andrijasevic, Étienne Balibar, Paula Banerjee, Vando Borghi, Ida Dominijanni, Verónica Gago, Rosalind Gill, Giorgio Grappi, Michael Hardt, Stefano Harney, Katie Hepworth, Rada Iveković, Randy Martin, Angela Mitropoulos, Toni Negri, Federico Rahola, Fabio Raimondi, Maurizio Ricciardi, Gigi Roggero, Ned Rossiter, Devi Sacchetto, Naoki Sakai, Ranabir Samaddar, Jon Solomon, William Walters, Jessica Whyte, Vassilis Tsianos, and Adelino Zanini. Thanks also to Courtney Berger at Duke University Press for her editorial work, two anonymous reviewers for their comments, and the Social Text Collective.

Finally, we thank those who have remained close to us during the writing of this book: Giovanna, Lisa, Luce, Marcello, and Mila.

Chapter One

THE PROLIFERATION OF BORDERS

The World Seen from a Cab

Anyone who has used the taxi system in New York City over the past decade will know the vast diversity that exists within the labor force that drives the city's yellow cabs. Fewer people will know what it takes to organize a strike among these predominantly migrant workers who speak more than eighty different languages. In *Taxi! Cabs and Capitalism in New York City* (2005), Biju Mathew, himself an organizer of the grassroots New York Taxi Workers Alliance (NYTWA), documents the history of the many strikes that led to the historic fare rise victory for the city's cab drivers in March 2004. Mathew's book is in many ways a story about borders—not only the linguistic borders that separate these workers but also the urban borders they routinely cross as part of their working lives, the international borders they cross to reach New York City, and the social borders that divide them from their clients and the owners from whom they lease the cabs. Investigating the restructuring of the NYC cab industry and its links to the wider shifts of capitalism in a global era, *Taxi!* illustrates how these many borders figure in the composition, struggles, and organizational forms of the labor force in this sector.

It is no secret that many NYC cab drivers are highly qualified individuals, whose presence in such a job is often a kind of transit station or waiting room for further labor mobility. Indeed, as has also been noted in a recent study of Indian techno-migrants in Silicon Valley (Ong 2006, 163–65), it is frequently the case that the

"illegal" juridical status of these workers produces another border that crisscrosses and multiplies the already existing diversity of this workforce. Moreover, the wounds of history resurface in the composition of the labor force. This is particularly the case with migrant workers coming from South Asia, for whom the memory and actual legacy of the subcontinent's partition is an ongoing experience. It is thus all the more remarkable that, as Mathew recalls, Pakistani and Indian drivers acted side by side during the 1998 New York taxi strike when some 24,000 yellow cab drivers took their cars off the road to protest new safety measures that subjected them to higher fines, mandatory drug testing, higher liability insurance requirements, and a prohibitive means of attaching penalty points to their licenses. Just one week after their home countries tested nuclear weapons in an environment of escalating nationalist tensions, these drivers acted together in two day-long strikes that brought the city to a halt.

Mathew bases his research on a particular image of globalization and neoliberalism as well as a critique of multiculturalism and postcolonialism as a set of state- and market-friendly discourses that protect established class positions. At times this seems to us too rigid. More interesting, in our view, is the way *Taxi!* can be read as a chronicle of the proliferation of borders in the world today and the multiscalar roles they play in the current reorganization of working lives. Although Mathew's study focuses on a single city, the increasing heterogeneity of global space is evident in the stories he tells about negotiating the metropolis. Issues of territory, jurisdiction, division of labor, governance, sovereignty, and translation all collapse into the urban spaces that these drivers traverse. This is not merely because the city in question is New York, where migrant labor has played a key role in the reshaping of the metropolitan economy and the development of social struggles in the past fifteen years (Ness 2005). As we show in the chapters that follow, the proliferation of borders in other parts of the world (whether on the "external frontiers" of Europe, the sovereign territory of China, or the Australian sphere of influence in the Pacific) displays tendencies common to those discussed by Mathew.

Our interest is in changing border and migration regimes in a world in which national borders are no longer the only or necessarily the most relevant ones for dividing and restricting labor mobilities. The nation-state still provides an important political reference from the point of view of power configurations and their articulation with capital–labor relations. Nevertheless, we are convinced that contemporary power dynamics and struggles cannot be contained by national borders or the international system of

states they putatively establish. This is an important point of departure for our work. Though we emphasize the strategic importance of borders in the contemporary world, we do not intend to join the chorus that in recent years and from many different points of view has celebrated the return of the nation-state on the world stage, dismissing the debates on globalization as mere ideological distortion. To the contrary, one of our central theses is that borders, far from serving simply to block or obstruct global flows, have become essential devices for their articulation. In so doing, borders have not just proliferated. They are also undergoing complex transformations that correspond to what Saskia Sassen (2007, 214) has called "the actual and heuristic disaggregation of 'the border.'" The multiple (legal and cultural, social and economic) components of the concept and institution of the border tend to tear apart from the magnetic line corresponding to the geopolitical line of separation between nation-states. To grasp this process, we take a critical distance from the prevalent interest in geopolitical borders in many critical approaches to the border, and we speak not only of a proliferation but also of a heterogenization of borders.

The traditional image of borders is still inscribed onto maps in which discrete sovereign territories are separated by lines and marked by different colors. This image has been produced by the modern history of the state, and we must always be aware of its complexities. Just to make an example, migration control has only quite recently become a prominent function of political borders. At the same time, historicizing the development of linear borders means to be aware of the risks of a naturalization of a specific image of the border. Such naturalization does not assist in understanding the most salient transformations we are facing in the contemporary world. Today borders are not merely geographical margins or territorial edges. They are complex social institutions, which are marked by tensions between practices of border reinforcement and border crossing. This definition of what makes up a border, proposed by Pablo Vila (2000) in an attempt to critically take stock of the development of studies on the U.S.–Mexican borderlands since the late 1980s, points to the tensions and conflicts constitutive of any border.

We are convinced that this constituent moment surfaces with particular intensity today, along specific geopolitical borders and the many other boundaries that cross cities, regions, and continents. Borders, on one hand, are becoming finely tuned instruments for managing, calibrating, and governing global passages of people, money, and things. On the other hand, they are spaces in which the transformations of sovereign power and the

ambivalent nexus of politics and violence are never far from view. To observe these dual tendencies is not merely to make the banal but necessary point that borders always have two sides, or that they connect as well as divide. Borders also play a key role in producing the times and spaces of global capitalism. Furthermore, they shape the struggles that rise up within and against these times and spaces—struggles that often allude problematically, but in rich and determinate ways, to the abolition of borders themselves. In this regard, borders have become in recent years an important concern of research and political and artistic practice. They are sites in which the turbulence and conflictual intensity of global capitalist dynamics are particularly apparent. As such they provide strategic grounds for the analysis and contestation of actually existing globalization.

What Is a Border?

In an influential essay titled "What Is a Border?," Étienne Balibar writes of the "polysemy" and "heterogeneity" of borders, noting that their "multiplicity, their hypothetical and fictive nature" does "not make them any less real" (2002, 76). Not only are there different kinds of borders that individuals belonging to different social groups experience in different ways, but borders also simultaneously perform "several functions of demarcation and territorialization—between distinct social exchanges or flows, between distinct rights, and so forth" (79). Moreover, borders are always *overdetermined*, meaning that "no political border is ever the mere boundary between two states" but is always "sanctioned, reduplicated and relativized by other geopolitical divisions" (79). "Without the *world-configuring function* they perform," Balibar writes, "there would be no borders—or no lasting borders" (79). His argument recalls, in a very different theoretical context, that developed in 1950 by Carl Schmitt in *The* Nomos *of the Earth* (2003), a text that maintains that the tracing of borders within modern Europe went hand in hand with political and legal arrangements that were designed to organize an *already global* space. These arrangements, including different kinds of "global lines" and geographical divisions, provided a blueprint for the colonial partitioning of the world and the regulation of relations between Europe and its outsides. To put it briefly, the articulation between these global lines of colonial and imperialist expansion and the drawing of linear boundaries between European and Western states has constituted for several centuries the dominant motif of the global geography organized by capital and state. Obviously, this history was neither peaceful nor linear.

The history of the twentieth century, which was characterized by the

turmoil of decolonization and the globalization of the nation-state and its linear borders in the wake of two world wars, witnessed an explosion of this political geography. Europe was displaced from the center of the map. The U.S. global hegemony, which seemed uncontested at the end of the Cold War, is rapidly giving way, not least through the economic crisis that marks the passage from the first to the second decade of the twenty-first century. On the horizon is a more variegated and unstable landscape of global power, which can no longer be fully described with such concepts as unilateralism and multilateralism (Haass 2008). New continental spaces emerge as sites of uneasy integration, regional interpenetration, and political, cultural, and social mobility. Although this is a long and doubtlessly unfinished process, we can identify several factors at play in its unfolding. Devastating wars, anticolonial upheavals, changing patterns of communication and transport, geopolitical shifts, financial bubbles and busts—all have contributed to redrawing the world picture. Furthermore, under the pressure of class struggles and interrelated contestations of race and gender, the capitalist mode of production continues to undergo momentous and uneven transformations. A crucial aspect of these changes is the realignment of relations between the state and capital—sometimes seen to work in tandem, at other times understood to exist in logical contradiction—but always implicated in shifting regimes of exploitation, dispossession, and domination.

If the political map of the world and the global cartography of capitalism were never entirely coincidental, they could once be easily read off one another. In the post–Cold War world, the superposition of these maps has become increasingly illegible. A combination of processes of "denationalization" (Sassen 2006) has invested both the state and capital with varying degrees of intensity and an uneven geometry of progression. In particular, the national denomination of capital has become an increasingly less significant index for the analysis of contemporary capitalism. In this book, we tackle this problem, elaborating the concept of "frontiers of capital" and investigating the relations between their constant expansion since the origin of modern capitalism and territorial boundaries. Although there has always been a constitutive tension between these relations, the development of capitalism as a world system has given shape to successive forms of articulation between the demarcations generated by economic processes and the borders of the state. One of our central points is that contemporary capital, characterized by processes of financialization and the combination of heterogeneous labor and accumulation regimes, negotiates the expansion of its frontiers with much more complex assemblages of power and law,

which include but also transcend nation-states. Looking at the expansion of capital's frontiers and considering the proliferation of political and legal boundaries, we are thus confronted with a geographical disruption and a continuous process of rescaling. A deeply heterogeneous global space corresponds to this process, and the border provides a particularly effective angle from which to investigate its making.

Meanwhile, the crisis of cartographical reason (Farinelli 2003), which has been at the center of debate between geographers since the early 1990s, has raised epistemological questions that are of great relevance for the study of the material transformation of borders. The increasing complexity of the relation between capital and state (as well as between their respective spatial representations and productions) is one of the factors at play in this crisis. This has given rise to a certain anxiety surrounding the figure and institution of borders, questioning their capacity to provide stable reference points and metaphors with which to geometrically order and frame the world (Gregory 1994; Krishna 1994; Painter 2008).

Borders today still perform a "world-configuring function," but they are often subject to shifting and unpredictable patterns of mobility and overlapping, appearing and disappearing as well as sometimes crystallizing in the form of threatening walls that break up and reorder political spaces that were once formally unified. They cross the lives of millions of men and women who are on the move, or, remaining sedentary, have borders cross them. In places like the Mediterranean or the deserts between Mexico and the United States, they violently break the passage of many migrants. At the same time, borders superimpose themselves over other kinds of limits and technologies of division. These processes are no less overdetermined than those of the modern world order, but the ways in which they configure the globe has dramatically changed. Rather than organizing a stable map of the world, the processes of proliferation and transformation of borders we analyze in this book aim at managing the creative destruction and constant recombining of spaces and times that lie at the heart of contemporary capitalist globalization. In this book we do not aim to discern the shape of a future world order. Rather, we investigate the present disorder of the world and try to explain why it is highly unrealistic to think of the future in terms of a return to some version of Westphalian order.

We know that the border is not a comfortable place to live. "Hatred, anger and exploitation," wrote Gloria Anzaldúa over twenty years ago in describing the background for the emergence of what she called the "new Mestiza," "are the prominent features of this landscape" (1987, 19). Walls, grating, and

barbed wire are the usual images that come to mind when we think about borders, whether that between Mexico and the United States, those in the occupied Palestinian territories, the "fence of death" constructed around the Spanish enclave of Ceuta in north Africa, or the many gated communities that have sprung up all over the world to protect the privileged and shut out the poor. We are prone to see borders as physical walls and metaphorical walls, such as those evoked by the image of Fortress Europe. This seems even more the case after the events of September 11, 2001, when borders became crucial sites of "securitarian" investment within political rhetoric as much as the actual politics of control. We are painfully aware of all of this. Yet we are convinced that the image of the border as a wall, or as a device that serves first and foremost to *exclude*, as widespread as it has been in recent critical studies, is misleading in the end. Isolating a single function of the border does not allow us to grasp the flexibility of this institution. Nor does it facilitate an understanding of the diffusion of practices and techniques of border control within territorially bound spaces of citizenship and their associated labor markets. We claim that borders are equally devices of inclusion that select and filter people and different forms of circulation in ways no less violent than those deployed in exclusionary measures. Our argument thus takes a critical approach to inclusion, which in most accounts is treated as an unalloyed social good. By showing how borders establish multiple points of control along key lines and geographies of wealth and power, we see inclusion existing in a continuum with exclusion, rather than in opposition to it. In other words, we focus on the hierarchizing and stratifying capacity of borders, examining their articulation to capital and political power whether they coincide with the territorial limits of states or exist within or beyond them. To analyze the pervasive character of the border's operations—let alone the marked violence that accompanies them—we need a more complex and dynamic conceptual language than that which sustains images of walls and exclusion.

Border as Method introduces a range of concepts that seek to grasp the mutations of labor, space, time, law, power, and citizenship that accompany the proliferation of borders in today's world. Among these are the multiplication of labor, differential inclusion, temporal borders, the sovereign machine of governmentality, and border struggles. Taken together, these concepts provide a grid within which to fathom the deep transformations of the social, economic, juridical, and political relations of our planet. They point to the radically equivocal character of borders and their growing inability to trace a firm line between the inside and outside of territorial states.

The political theorist Wendy Brown (2010) has illustrated how the proliferation of walls and barriers in the contemporary world is more a symptom of the crisis and transformation of state sovereignty than a sign of its reaffirmation. Particularly important, in our view, is Brown's thesis that "even the most physically intimidating of these new walls serves to regulate rather than exclude legal and illegal migrant labor," producing a zone of indistinction "between law and non-law of which flexible production has need" (Brown 2008, 16–17). Our argument goes beyond Brown's by considering how borders regulate and structure the relations between capital, labor, law, subjects, and political power even in instances where they are not lined by walls or other fortifications. The distinctiveness of our approach lies in its attempt to separate the border from the wall, showing how the regulatory functions and symbolic power of the border test the barrier between sovereignty and more flexible forms of global governance in ways that provide a prism through which to track the transformations of capital and the struggles that mount within and against them.

The most acute architects and urbanists who have studied one of the most physically intimidating walls the world currently knows—the one that runs through the occupied Palestinian territories in Israel—have shown how it produces an elusive and mobile geography, which is continually reshaped by Israel's military strategies. Far from marking the linear border of Israel's sovereignty, the wall functions as "a membrane that lets certain flows pass and blocks others," transforming the entire Palestinian territory into a "frontier zone" (Petti 2007, 97). According to Eyal Weizman: "The frontiers of the Occupied Territories are not rigid and fixed at all; rather they are elastic, and in constant formation. The linear border, a cartographic imaginary inherited from the military and political spatiality of the nation state has splintered into a multitude of temporary, transportable, deployable and removable border-synonyms—'separation walls,' 'barriers,' 'blockades,' 'closures,' 'road blocks,' 'checkpoints,' 'sterile areas,' 'special security zones,' 'closed military areas' and 'killing zones' " (2007, 6). Shortly we return to the distinction between the border and the frontier. For now, we want to note the emphasis Weizman places on the elasticity of the territory and the mobility of techniques for controlling the limit between inside and outside in a situation dominated by what should represent the most static crystallization of the linear border: a wall, no less. Clearly the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories needs to be examined in its specificity. But what Weizman calls the elasticity of territory is also a feature that can be observed in relation to the operation of many other borders across the

world. Attentiveness to the historical and geographical significance of individual borders does not disqualify an approach that isolates particular aspects of a situation and lets them resonate with what takes place in very different spatial and temporal zones. This is what we propose to do in the following chapters, which explore not only how individual borders connect and divide but also the patterns of connection and division that invest the relations between radically heterogeneous *borderscapes*.

In the Borderscape

Our aim is to bring into view a series of problems, processes, and concepts that allow us to elaborate a new theoretical approach to the border. In so doing, we take distance from arguments that center on the image of the wall or the theme of security. We also depart from the classical paradigm of border studies (Kolossov 2005; Newman 2006), which tends to proceed by the comparison of discrete case studies, assuming clear and distinct differences between the various situations and contexts under investigation. The instances of bordering that we analyze in the following chapters are selected according to the intensity with which the relation between the two poles of border reinforcement and border crossing manifests itself in border struggles. We are of course aware of the radical difference between the elusive borders that circumscribe special economic zones in China and the external frontiers of the European Union, to mention an example. But our primary interest is not in comparing different instances or techniques of bordering. Rather, we want to interlace, juxtapose, superimpose, and let resonate the practices, techniques, and sites in question, highlighting their mutual implications and consonances as well as their differences and dissonances, their commonalities, and their singularities. The result is a different means of knowledge production, one that necessarily involves practices of translation, although more in a conceptual than a linguistic sense. Later in the book we elaborate on this question drawing on Antonio Gramsci's reflections on the translatability of scientific and philosophical languages, which is constructed on the structural friction between concepts and heterogeneous specific concrete situations. Border as method is an attempt to make this friction productive both from a theoretical point of view and for the understanding of diverse empirical borderscapes.

To do this, we draw on a great wealth of ethnographic writings and materials without ever limiting our analysis to a single ethnographic focus. By engaging with ethnographic works, alongside writings from fields such as geography, history, and jurisprudence, we hope to provide an empirical

foil to test our conceptual propositions. We also aim to conceptually question and revise the assumptions and methods that typically lie behind the construction of the ethnographic object: assumptions about the relations between time and space, methods of reflexivity, approaches to translation, and so on. Our concentration on connections and disconnections, both conceptual and material, is thus highly indebted to the careful work of ethnographers but also seeks to move beyond even the most complex multi-site studies, which remain tethered to the ethics of "do-ability" and the imperative of "being there" that are the hallmarks of ethnographic practice (Berg 2008). It is not that we necessarily agree with sage figures like George Marcus, who in discussing anthropology's "professional culture of method" suggests that recent ethnography has produced "no new ideas" (2008, 3–4). More simply, we believe that efforts to theorize globalization must account for "indirect social relations" that can be mediated through "abstract third agents," such as logistical calculations, legal orders, economic forces, or humanitarian narratives. These orders and processes channel movements of capital, goods, and labor in ways that are not immediately accessible to "an ethnographic data set obtained primarily through direct sensory experience" (Feldman 2011, 375). Moreover, the sites and instances we discuss are not always ones that it has been possible for us to visit, for reasons of both time and resources. Although we occasionally draw on our own experiences and observations, we question the limiting perspective imposed by the view that the breadth of research compromises its depth and rigor. Rather, we proceed with the commitment that breadth can produce depth, or better, produce a new kind of conceptual depth, "new ideas." Our study is thus deliberately wide-ranging. What we seek to develop is a relational approach to the study of borders, one that remains politically responsive to the experiences of border crossing and border reinforcement and also adequate to the equivocations of definition, space, and function that mark the concept of the border itself.

For both of us, the theoretical engagement with issues of borders, labor, and migration is rooted in a history of travel, intellectual engagement, and political activism that, in very different geographical and symbolic contexts, has molded patterns of friendship and relationships that have deeply influenced our work and lives. As it happens, 1993 was an important threshold in these political histories. In that year, Mezzadra was living in the Italian city of Genoa, where what was labeled the country's first "race riots" unfolded during the summer. Violent street tussles broke out as migrants were com-

pelled to defend themselves from attacks by local youths. The attempt to build up a kind of antiracist front in Genoa following these events proved crucial to Mezzadra's intellectual and political trajectory, profoundly skewing his activity toward the articulation of migration politics at the European level. It was also the year of Neilson's return to Australia after a period in the United States, where he had participated in actions against the interception and return of Haitian migrants (via Guantánamo Bay) who had sought to flee after the military overthrowing of the Aristide government in 1991. The violation of UN conventions implicit in the policy of President George H. W. Bush—which was continued by President Bill Clinton—had provided the trigger for Australia's introduction of mandatory detention in 1992 and subsequent practices of migrant interception. This less-than-fortuitous connection between border regimes convinced Neilson (1996) that the struggle against detention camps in Australia, which was often articulated exclusively at the national level, urgently needed to be linked to border struggles in other parts of the world.

A decade later, we met and began to carry out our first dialogues (Mezzadra and Neilson 2003). By that time the border regimes in Europe and Australia had considerably mutated and, in many respects, in similar ways. Following the *Tampa* incident of 2001, when Australia refused to accept some 438 migrants who had been rescued by a Norwegian tanker and arranged their incarceration on the Pacific island of Nauru, the processes of "externalization" of migrant detention and border control were fully under way. Similar arrangements were already in place with the involvement of third countries in the border control practices and technologies of the European Union. Moreover, there were similarities of activist experience in Australia and Italy. For instance, the actions at the Woomera detention camp for "illegal" migrants in the south Australian desert in April 2002 and at the Bari-Palese camp in Puglia in July 2003 were occasions when protest activities allowed detainees to escape. From the polemics and debates that followed these important and to some extent politically confusing incidents, in which the borders that separate migration activists from detained migrants were temporarily removed by the physical dismantling of fences, we learned the perils of too insistently correlating the activist desire to challenge or democratize borders with the risk assumed by migrants who actually transgress these borders. As tempting and as politically effective as slogans like "*Siamo tutti clandestini*" (We are all illegal migrants) may be, there are important differences of ethics and experience at hand here. These are dif-

ferences that we attempt to keep in mind, both theoretically and politically, as we draw on our experiences to inform the arguments and concepts that populate the following chapters.

Although our experiences of migration activism have unfolded in contexts where there has been attention to global connections, they are by necessity limited. Over the years we have had the opportunity to participate in research projects, both academic and activist, that have taken us to sites where many of the questions and challenges posed by this book come into dramatic relief: production zones in China, new towns in India, La Salada informal market in Buenos Aires, and the fortified borderzones on both sides of the Strait of Gibraltar, just to name a few. These are all situations we write about. We also seek to make connections between them and other instances of bordering in ways that intertwine ethnographic observation and political analysis. In this way, we reach beyond existing debates on borders, migration, and labor to add to the literature on global power and governance, the mutations of capital and sovereignty, and their implications for subjects and struggles across different configurations of space and time. This research process attempts to filter both theoretical and ethnographic materials, whatever their provenance, through our own political experiences, which are, as is always the case in collaborative work, diffuse and inconsistent. Although this filtering may not always be foregrounded on the surface of our text, it has remained a crucial part of our writing practice—a kind of political pivot and editorial razor. This technique, we like to believe, gives our writing the possibility to range across radically diverse borderscapes in different parts of the world.

We take the term *borderscape* from the work of Suvendrini Perera (2007, 2009). In her analysis of the shifting and elusive borders that circumscribe Australia's territory from the Pacific zone, Perera highlights—using terms analogous to those Weizman deployed to describe the occupied Palestinian territories—the simultaneous expansion and contraction of political spaces and the "multiple resistances, challenges, and counterclaims" to which they give rise. Her work is closely engaged with the regime of border control known as the Pacific Solution, which was introduced following the *Tampa* incident in 2001. This involved the establishment of offshore detention camps for migrants attempting to reach Australia by boat and the excision of remote Australian territories from the country's migration zone, making it impossible to claim asylum on outlying islands that are key destinations on maritime migration routes. Placing these developments in the context of the longer *durée* of mobilities and exchanges across the "maritime highways

of the Indian and Pacific Oceans," Perera points to the formation of a "shifting and conflictual" zone in which "different temporalities and overlapping emplacements as well as emergent spatial organizations" take shape (2007, 206–7).

Independently from these developments in the Pacific zone, the concept of the borderscape nicely captures many of the important conflicts and transformations that have been at stake in border studies debates in the past two decades, whether in fields such as political geography (Newman and Paasi 1998) or international relations (Bigo 2006), to name only two. The concept suggests the dynamic character of the border, which is now widely understood as a set of "practices and discourses that 'spread' into the whole of society" (Paasi 1999, 670). At the same time, it registers the necessity to analyze the border not only in its spatial but also in its temporal dimensions. Mobilizing the concept of the borderscape allows us to highlight the conflictual determination of the border, the tensions and struggles that play a decisive role in its constitution. Our approach is very different from arguments that stress the "normative" illegitimacy of the exclusion effected by borders (see, for example, Cole 2000 and Carens 2010) and issue in various calls for their opening or abolition (Harris 2002; Hayter 2004). Readers will not find recipes for a future borderless world in the following pages. We agree in this regard with Chandra Mohanty (2003, 2) when she writes of a need to acknowledge "the fault lines, conflicts, differences, fear, and containment that borders represent." Extending and radicalizing Perera's line of thought, we try to move one step further by focusing on *border struggles* or those struggles that take shape around the ever more unstable line between the "inside" and "outside," between inclusion and exclusion.

Writing of border struggles is for us a way of placing an emphasis on the production of political subjectivity. We are not interested only in movements that openly contest borders and their discriminatory effects, such as those in which undocumented migrants have emerged as protagonists (Suárez-Naval et al. 2008). We want the notion of border struggles to refer also to the set of everyday practices by which migrants continually come to terms with the pervasive effects of the border, subtracting themselves from them or negotiating them through the construction of networks and transnational social spaces (Rodríguez 1996). Moreover, we want to register how border struggles—which always involve specific subjective positions and figures—invest more generally the field of political subjectivity, testing its intrinsic limits and reorganizing its internal divisions. In this way, border struggles open a new continent of political possibilities, a space within which

new kinds of political subjects, which abide neither the logics of citizenship nor established methods of radical political organization and action, can trace their movements and multiply their powers. The exploration of this continent, beginning with the material conditions that generate the tensions of which border struggles are the sign, seems to us more promising—and more politically urgent—than the simple denunciation of the capacity of borders to exclude or the wish for a world "without borders."

Border as Method

More than once we have recalled Balibar's notion of the polysemy of the border, a concept that corresponds with the multiplicity of terms that, in many languages, refer to the semantic area of the border (just think, in English, of the words *boundary* and *frontier*). It is no accident that today the metaphoric use of these terms is widespread (Newman and Paasi 1998). This is evident not only in everyday language (e.g., the "frontiers of scientific research") but also in the specialist language of the social sciences, where phrases such as "boundary work" and "boundary object" have entered into common use (Lemont and Molnár 2002). Aside from its geographical, political, and juridical dimensions, the concept of the border has an important symbolic dimension, which has come to the fore today with the multiplication of the tensions that invest the classically modern configuration of the border as a separating line between sovereign state territories (Cella 2006; Zanini 1997). Both sociology, beginning with the work of Georg Simmel (2009), and anthropology, beginning with an important essay by Fredrik Barth (1979), have made fundamental contributions toward understanding this symbolic dimension of the border, including its role in distinguishing social forms and organizing cultural difference. In the following chapters, particularly when we discuss internal borders, we keep these notions of social and cultural borders in play. At the same time, we explore the complex modes of articulation (and also the tensions and the gaps) between different dimensions of the border. In doing this, we use with a certain degree of freedom the words *border* and *boundary* as interchangeable, while we make a clear-cut distinction between *border* and *frontier*.

The geometrical abstraction of exclusive territoriality and linear borders, while it has exerted an extremely important influence on the way in which politics has been conceived and executed in the modern era, was only ever a convention (Cuttitta 2006, 2007; Galli 2010, 36–53). It would certainly be worthwhile to reconstruct the complex and nonlinear processes that led in Europe to the decline of the medieval marches and the rise of modern

borders between states (Febvre 1962). More relevant for our study, however, is to highlight how the history of the modern system of states unfolded under the horizon of global space from its very beginning. To fully understand this history, and the linear conception of the border that informs it, we argue that it is necessary to account for the *constitutive* role of the *colonial frontier*.

The frontier, as is evident from the narrative around which one of the foundation myths of U.S. identity is constructed (Turner 1920), is by definition a space open to expansion, a mobile "front" in continuous formation. When we write of the colonial frontier, we refer, on one hand and in very general terms, to the qualitative distinction between European space, in which the linear border evolved, and those extra-European spaces, which were by definition open to conquest. This distinction is certainly an essential aspect of the modern juridical and political organization of space, as encoded, for instance, in works such as Emerich de Vattel's 1758 treatise *The Law of Nations* (1916). On the other hand, we refer to the fact that in actual colonial situations, the reality of frontier, with its characteristics of opening and indetermination, was often present. In these contexts, the frontier tended to superimpose itself over other divisions (most obviously that between colonists and natives, but also lines of territorial demarcation that cut through formally unified domains), rendering colonial space and its cartographic projection much more complex than its metropolitan counterpart (Banerjee 2010).

It is important to remember that mapping was a key tool of colonial domination. The tensions and clashes between cartographic tools constructed on the model of the sovereign state with its firm boundaries and specific "indigenous" geographies gave rise to wars and shaped the "geo-bodies" of postcolonial states (Winichakul 1994). They also influenced the configuration of vast border areas such as the Indian northeast (Kumar and Zou 2011). It is also worth remembering that in the colonized parts of the world, a whole series of spatial innovations was forged, from the camp to the protectorate, the unincorporated territory to the dependency, the concession to the treaty port (Stoler 2006). Later in this book we map the metamorphosis and continuous development of such indeterminate and ambiguous spaces in the contemporary world. The analysis of bordering technologies within emerging postdevelopmental geographies in Asia and Latin America is an important feature of our work. We try to analyze these geographies by letting our investigations of them resonate with what we have learned from other borderscapes. Though critical border studies are often focused on specifically Western contexts, such

as the U.S.–Mexican borderlands or the "external frontiers" of the European Union, border as method allows us to cross disciplinary and geographical divides and take a truly global and postcolonial angle.

The distinction between the border and the frontier is undoubtedly important (see Prescott 1987). The former has typically been considered a line, whereas the latter has been constructed as an open and expansive space. In many contemporary contexts, however, this distinction seems to dissolve. The borders of the current European space, for example, take on aspects of the indetermination that has historically characterized the frontier, expanding into surrounding territories and constructing spaces according to a variable geometry articulated on multiple geographical scales (Cuttitta 2007). *Border as Method* deals with such instances of tricky conceptual overlapping and confusion through the punctual analysis of concrete borderscapes. In any case, as should be clear from the title of this book, for us the border is something more than a research object that can be subject to various methodological approaches or a semantic field whose multiple dimensions it is necessary to explore. Insofar as it serves at once to make divisions and establish connections, the border is an epistemological device, which is at work whenever a distinction between subject and object is established. Once again, Balibar most precisely describes this aspect of the border, noting the difficulty inherent in defining the concept itself:

> The idea of a simple definition of what constitutes a border is, by definition, absurd: to mark out a border is precisely, to define a territory, to delimit it, and so to register the identity of that territory, or confer one upon it. Conversely, however, to define or identify in general is nothing other than to trace a border, to assign boundaries or borders (in Greek, *horos*; in Latin, *finis* or *terminus*; in German, *Grenze*; in French, *borne*). The theorist who attempts to define what a border is is in danger of going round in circles, as the very representation of the border is the precondition for any definition. (2002, 76)

Borders, then, are essential to cognitive processes, because they allow both the establishment of taxonomies and conceptual hierarchies that structure the movement of thought. Furthermore, they establish the scientific division of labor associated with the sectioning of knowledge into different disciplinary zones. Cognitive borders, in this sense, often intertwine with geographical borders, as occurs for example in comparative literature or in so-called area studies, with which we concern ourselves in chapter 2. In any case, it should be clear that cognitive borders have great philosophical rele-

vance, since they describe a general—perhaps one could even say a universal—dimension of human thought.

A thinker who has for many years studied the violence and border conflicts in regions such as the Balkans and the Indian subcontinent, Rada Iveković (2010), has recently proposed to rethink the "politics of philosophy" in relation to what she calls *le partage de la raison*. The French term *partage*, which combines the sense of both division and connection, has no straightforward English translation. Nominating at once the act of division and the act of connection, the two actions constitutive of the border, *le partage de la raison*, in Iveković's formulation, highlights the crucial role of translation as a social, cultural, and political practice that enables the elaboration of a new concept of the common. We return to this point in the final chapter of the book. Here, the reference to Iveković's work allows us to clarify the sense in which we write of border as method. On one hand, we refer to a process of producing knowledge that holds open the tension between empirical research and the invention of concepts that orient it. On the other hand, to approach the border as a method means to suspend, to recall a phenomenological category, the set of disciplinary practices that present the objects of knowledge as already constituted and investigate instead the processes by which these objects are constituted. It is by rescuing and reactivating the constituent moment of the border that we try to make productive the vicious circle Balibar identifies.

Just as we want to question the vision of the border as a neutral line, then, we also question the notion that method is a set of pregiven, neutral techniques that can be applied to diverse objects without fundamentally altering the ways in which they are constructed and understood. At stake in border as method is something more than the "performativity of method" (Law 2004, 149) or even the intriguing idea of "analytic borderlands" (Sassen 2006, 379–86). That is, while we accept that methods tend to produce (often in contradictory and unexpected ways) the worlds they claim to describe, for us the question of border as method is something more than methodological. It is above all a question of politics, about the kinds of social worlds and subjectivities produced at the border and the ways that thought and knowledge can intervene in these processes of production. To put this differently, we can say that method for us is as much about acting on the world as it is about knowing it. More accurately, it is about the relation of action to knowledge in a situation where many different knowledge regimes and practices come into conflict. Border as method involves negotiating the

boundaries between the different kinds of knowledge that come to bear on the border and, in so doing, aims to throw light on the subjectivities that come into being through such conflicts.

For all of these reasons, the border is for us not so much a research object as an epistemological viewpoint that allows an acute critical analysis not only of how relations of domination, dispossession, and exploitation are being redefined presently but also of the struggles that take shape around these changing relations. The border can be a method precisely insofar as it is conceived of as a site of struggle. As we have already stressed, it is the intensity of the struggles fought on borders around the world that prompts our research and theoretical elaborations. Once we investigate the multifarious practices with which migrants challenge borders on a daily basis, it becomes clear that border struggles are all too often matters of life and death. Although we elaborate a wider concept of border struggles, which corresponds to what we have called the proliferation and heterogenization of borders in the contemporary world, we never forget this materiality. This focus on struggles also ensures the punctuality of border as method. It guides us not only in the selection of the relevant empirical settings for our investigations but also in the very construction of the "objects" to be studied.

Our perspective is thus very close to several projects of militant investigation that are currently developed by critical scholars and activists in many parts of the world. It also builds on many developments that have taken place in the field of postcolonial studies over the past twenty years. Walter Mignolo, in particular, has elaborated a comprehensive rereading of the history of modernity in the light of what he calls "colonial difference," proposing a new theoretical paradigm that he labels *border thinking*. In many respects, Mignolo provides a crucial reference point for the development of our approach, particularly regarding the "displacement" of Europe that he advocates alongside other postcolonial critics and his questioning of the use of categories such as "center," "periphery," and "semi-periphery" within world systems theory. Insofar as these categories crystallize and mark the epistemology that orients research, they effectively reproduce the marginality (or the peripheral status) of the histories, spaces, and subjects of the colonial frontier of modernity. At the same time, Mignolo's border thinking also seems to paradoxically reinscribe the consistency (and hence the borders) of Europe and the West when he writes of an "epistemology of the exteriority" (Mignolo and Tlostanova 2006, 206). By contrast, it is precisely the problematic nature of the distinction between interior and exterior that the approach we call border as method seeks to highlight.

In any case, at the center of our analysis are specific landscapes, practices, and border technologies. The method we pursue emerges from a continual confrontation with the materiality of the tensions and conflicts that constitute the border as an institution and set of social relations. Even when we confront apparently abstract themes, such as translation, we seek to keep this materiality present. In the particular case of translation, our reflections turn on experiences such as those of the taxi drivers analyzed by Mathew, with which we opened our discussion. In this instance, the processes of translation between dozens of languages, along with the affective investments and misunderstandings that accompanied them, were one of the essential elements in the development of struggles and organizational forms among a specific transnational component of labor power in New York City.

Containing Labor Power

We have just mentioned another concept that, in the specific determination it assumes within Marxian theory, orients our research. Central to any consideration of current global processes is the fact that the world has become more open to flows of goods and capital but more closed to the circulation of human bodies. There is, however, one kind of commodity that is inseparable from the human body, and the absolute peculiarity of this commodity provides a key to understanding and unraveling the seemingly paradoxical situation mentioned above. We have in mind the commodity of labor power, which at once describes a capacity of human bodies and exists as a good traded in markets at various geographical scales. Not only is labor power a commodity unlike any other (the only possible term of comparison being money), but the markets in which it is exchanged are peculiar. This is also because the role of borders in shaping labor markets is particularly pronounced. The processes of filtering and differentiation that occur at the border increasingly unfold within these markets, influencing the composition of what, to use another Marxian category, we call living labor.

There is also a peculiar tension within the abstract commodity form inherent to labor power that derives from the fact that it is inseparable from *living* bodies. Unlike the case of a table, for instance, the border between the commodity form of labor power and its "container" must continuously be reaffirmed and retraced. This is why the political and legal constitution of labor markets necessarily involves shifting regimes for the investment of power in life, which also correspond to different forms of the production of subjectivity. The concept of labor power, in its Marxian elaboration, acquires its most profound sense in light of a reflection on subjectivity and

its relation to power. In the same moment as Karl Marx affirms the "property of the self" as the essential character that has delimited the basis of modern subjectivity at least since Locke (Mezzadra 2004), he also introduces a radical scission into this field: labor power marks one of the poles of this scission and the other is marked by money, which Marx describes as the "social power" that the individual carries "in his pocket" (1973, 157). This scission changes the way the "property of the self" is lived by two different classes of individuals: one of which acquires experience through the *power* of money and the other of which is continuously and necessarily restricted, to organize its relation with the world and its own reproduction, to labor power, defined by Marx as a generally human *potentiality*, as "the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in the physical form, the living personality, of a human being" (1977, 270).

In general terms, this scission in the field of subjectivity provides a fundamental criterion for the analysis of contemporary global capitalism. This remains true even in the presence of transformations that allow, through the use of information and communication technologies, the organization within sectors such as software programming and business processing of what has been called the "virtual migration" of workers (Aneesh 2006). At the same time, it is important to note that the "generically human" potentiality of labor power, to recall Marx's formulation, is always incarnated in sexed bodies that are socially constructed within multiple systems of domination, not least among them racism. To put it simply: the modalities through which "bearers" (another crucial term employed by Marx) of labor power access their "potency" are structurally and originally (that means, not secondarily!) marked by race, nation, geographical origin, and gender.

We seek to bring together a perspective on the border marked by a concern with labor power with our interest in border struggles and the production of subjectivity. Our analysis thus focuses on the tense and conflictual ways in which borders shape the lives and experiences of subjects who, due to the functioning of the border itself, are configured as bearers of labor power. The production of the subjectivity of these subjects constitutes an essential moment within the more general processes of the production of labor power as a commodity. Once seen from this perspective, both the techniques of power that invest the border and the social practices and struggles that unfold around it must be analyzed with regard to multiple and unstable configurations of gender and race, the production and reproduction of which are themselves greatly influenced by the border. To affirm that the border plays a decisive role in the production of labor power as a com-

modity is also to contend that the ways migratory movements are controlled, filtered, and blocked by border regimes have more general effects on the political and juridical constitution of labor markets, and thus on the experiences of living labor in general. We show that the struggles that develop around these experiences, whether centrally organized or autonomous, always imply a confrontation with the question of the border. Furthermore, we argue that in this context translation can play a key role in the invention of new forms of organization and new social institutions.

It is precisely the relation between labor power, translation, and political struggle that links the situation of the NYC taxi drivers to the other instances of border reinforcing and border crossing that we analyze. This is not to imply that we deal with a stable or linear set of relations between labor forces, borders, and political processes in the various subjective and objective situations that our analysis brings together. To the contrary, we seek to mark the constant and unpredictable mutations in these arrangements by introducing the concept of the *multiplication of labor*. We elaborate this notion as part of an ongoing engagement with various attempts to materially ground a new theory of political subjectivity, whether through the concept of the multitude (Hardt and Negri 2000; Virno 2003), or the ongoing debates surrounding the transformations of citizenship (Balibar 2003a; Isin 2002) and the category of the people (Laclau 2005). The multiplication of labor in this regard is a conceptual tool for investigating the composition of living labor in a situation characterized by a high degree of heterogeneity. In part it refers to the intensification of labor processes and the tendency for work to colonize the time of life. It also attempts to grasp the subjective implications of the diversification and heterogenization of workforces that are the other side of the growing relevance of social cooperation in contemporary capitalism. The concept of the multiplication of labor is therefore meant to accompany as well as supplement the more familiar concept of the division of labor, be it technical, social, or international.

By inverting this classical notion from political economy, we want above all to question the orthodoxy that categorizes the global spectrum of labor according to international divisions or stable configurations such as the three worlds model or those elaborated around binaries such as center/periphery or North/South. We also seek to rethink the categories by which the hierarchization of labor is specified within labor markets, however they may be defined or bordered. Our discussion of old and new theories of the international division of labor from the point of view of the Marxian analysis of the world market in chapter 3 shows that the geographical disruption

lying at the heart of contemporary global processes needs to be analyzed not just in terms of division. More important, we argue, is the multiplication of scales, zones, and channels that undermines the stability of global space. Speaking of a multiplication of labor provides an angle from which these dynamics can be analyzed in terms of their consequences for the subjective composition of living labor. This requires a careful investigation of the processes of legal and political constitution of labor markets, within which migrant labor plays a crucial role today.

In particular, we critically discuss the notion that skill is the predominant factor that divides workers from each other. The multiplication of labor certainly points to the multiplication of elements of division and hierarchy. For instance, the shift from quota to points systems for the selection and management of labor migration by many countries (Shachar 2006, 2009) indicates that skill is only one criterion among many—including cultural factors such as religion and language—that contribute to the shaping of national labor markets. Moreover, the fact that many workers who perform supposedly unskilled tasks, such as taxi driving, possess high qualifications and skills points to other factors, in this case primarily juridical status, that are at stake in the production of laboring subjects. In a world where market rights are increasingly independent of the territorial configuration of power, the processes constituting labor markets are themselves increasingly delinked from the nation-state. In this sense, the multiplication of labor acquires a political meaning. Though it is necessary to remember that multiplication is a process of division, it is also important to consider how the contemporary multiplication of labor can produce political subjects who do not fit into established categories of political belonging and expression, such as those associated with citizenship, trade unions, political parties, nongovernmental organizations, or even activism. This is no more so than at the border, where the struggles of those who challenge some of the most stringent and sophisticated techniques of discipline and control open possibilities for articulating labor to politics in powerful ways.

"If *labor* supplies the crucial theoretical key that opens up the practical linkage between the antithetical poles of bare life and sovereign (state) power," writes Nicholas De Genova, "the literal and also conceptual terrain that necessarily conjoins them, nevertheless, is *space*" (2010, 50). Likewise, the literal and conceptual terrain on which we explore the multiplication of labor is the heterogeneous domain of global space as it is continuously divided and redivided by the proliferation of borders. This entails a necessarily wide-ranging analysis in the geographical sense but a tightly integrated con-

ceptual and theoretical line of argument. On one hand, we explore the heterogenization of global space and the way it forces seemingly discrete territories and actors into unexpected connections that facilitate processes of production, dispossession, and exploitation. On the other hand, we draw attention to the axiomatic workings of capital, which permeate the encounters and processes of negotiation, mixing, conflict, and translation that such heterogenization necessitates and allows. Working between these poles, we investigate how the unity of contemporary capital is fractured through a multiplicity of particular, fragmented, and material operations while also asking how border struggles remake the political subjectivity of labor in ways that provide contested grounds for building a politics of the common.

Chapter 2 engages the spatial dimension of borders and asks why geographical and in particular territorial borders have come to dominate understandings of the border in general. Working between the history of cartography and the history of capital, we trace the intertwining of geographical with cognitive borders and the role of civilizational divides in making the modern state and capitalism, European imperialism, the rise of area studies, and the emergence of contemporary world regionalism. This focus on the making of the world, or what we call *fabrica mundi*, underlies a critical investigation in chapter 3 of the political economic concept of the international division of labor. Investigating the historical origins of this term and surveying the political, economic, and analytical uses to which it has been put, we argue that heterogenization of global space throws into question any understanding of the division of labor that reflects a mapping of the world as a series of discrete territories. The concept of the multiplication of labor is proposed from within an analysis of the contemporary "transitions of capital." Focusing on how the current patterning of the world corresponds to a deep heterogeneity in the composition of living labor, chapter 4 explores the borders that connect and divide two particularly significant subjective figures of contemporary labor, namely, the care worker and the financial trader. This leads us not only to provide a specific angle on the widely discussed topics of the feminization of labor (as well as migration) and the financialization of capitalism but also to question the taken-for-granted nature of the division between skilled and unskilled labor and in particular the role it plays in migration studies and policies.

Chapter 5 continues this line of questioning, placing an emphasis on the temporal aspects of methods of border policing and labor control. Here we introduce the concept of differential inclusion and draw parallels between more and less disciplinary ways of filtering and governing labor mobilities.