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## Bringing the Anglo-Scottish Border “Back in”: Reassessing Cross-border Relations in the Context of Greater Scottish Autonomy

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### ABSTRACT

*This special issue of the Journal of Borderlands Studies “brings the Anglo-Scottish border back in” by drawing upon six of the contributions from an ESRC Seminar Series on the nature of the cross-border relationship between Scotland and its “closest cousins,” in Northern England. The seminars, which took place in 2014–2015, involved a range of contributors including academics, policy-makers and practitioners, with the academics drawn from a range of disciplines, including politics, cultural history, visual culture, economic geography, sociology, and planning. This introduction will examine the main characteristics of the Anglo–Scottish border and capture the nature of contemporary border change. It will then focus on the cross-border relationship between Scotland and the North of England before highlighting the key themes of the six articles contained in this special issue. It will conclude by examining how debates on the Anglo–Scottish border, and its borderlands, can be located within recent attempts to reconceptualize borders and bordering.*

### Introduction: Living in Interesting Times

For nearly 300 years after the 1707 Act of Union brought an end to Scotland’s status as an independent kingdom, the Anglo–Scottish border has been regarded as a relatively unimportant and non-contentious internal boundary within the United Kingdom, of more interest to tourists and authors of historical romantic novels than to politicians and the public. Indeed, up until very recently, anyone traveling across the border that separates Scotland and England would be hard-pressed to work out where one country begins and the other ends.

However, in a relatively short period of time, the whole dynamic of the relationship between Scotland and the rest of the UK has undergone a profound change. The result, and fall-out, from the September 2014 referendum on Scottish independence, and the unparalleled success of the Scottish National Party (SNP) in May 2015’s UK General Election, have ensured that the nature and significance of the Anglo–Scottish border is of

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growing political salience. This is only likely to intensify, as the UK Government has agreed to the granting of additional devolution in the near future, which will increase further the divergence between the two nations (HMG 2015). Indeed, when coupled with the growing political influence of the large group of SNP MPs within the Westminster Parliament, this ensures that—as far the UK political system goes—things will, quite simply, never be the same again.

The importance of both the referendum campaign, and the eventual vote (on September 14, 2014), cannot be over emphasized. While a majority (55%) of voters rejected the chance of an independent Scotland, it is noticeable that following a “Yes” campaign characterized by very high levels of civic engagement, particularly amongst young people—16 year olds were allowed to vote—as many as 45% of voters (1.6 million) were prepared to leave the UK (Electoral Commission 2014). The scale of the “Yes” Vote ensured that all major UK political parties committed themselves to granting Scotland greater powers. As UK Prime Minister David Cameron announced on the morning after the referendum result

I also want to pay tribute to Yes Scotland for a well-fought campaign and to say to all those who did vote for independence: ‘we hear you’. “We now have a chance - a great opportunity - to change the way the British people are governed, and change it for the better ... the three pro-union parties have made commitments, clear commitments, on further powers for the Scottish Parliament. We will ensure that they are honoured in full. (Gov.UK 2014)

These events, when considered alongside the trebling in SNP membership in the week after the referendum result, and their incredible success in winning 56 of the 59 parliamentary seats in Scotland in the May 2015 General Election (previously they held 6), confirms that Scotland’s position within the UK, and its relationship with the other constituent parts, is now the subject of a radical reassessment (see for example: Foley and Ramand 2014; Gallagher 2014; Hassan and Mitchell 2013; Mclean, Gallagher, and Lodge 2013). Adding further to this potentially *irrevocable* shift in the nature of politics in the UK, is the British public’s decision to leave the EU in the June 2016 referendum. Such an exit has triggered calls for a second referendum on an independent Scotland, given that the large majority of Scots voted to remain in the EU (The Independent 2016)

The developing momentum of the case for devolution/independence has also had the effect of reigniting debates about the nature and purpose of the Anglo-Scottish border itself: debates that have lain relatively dormant for over three centuries. One area where a closer examination of the changing nature of the border is of particular value is in charting the relationship between Scotland and its nearest neighbor across the border, Northern England.

This special issue of the *Journal of Borderland Studies* “brings the Anglo-Scottish border back in” by drawing upon six of the contributions from an ESRC Seminar Series on the nature of the cross-border relationship between Scotland and its “closest cousins,” in Northern England. The seminars, which took place in 2014–2015, involved a range of contributors including academics, policy-makers and practitioners, with the academics drawn from a range of disciplines, including politics, cultural history, visual culture, economic geography, sociology, and planning.<sup>1</sup> What these different disciplinary offerings provide is not only their own distinct focus on the key dimensions (political, economic, cultural, spatial) of borders and borders areas, but also a number of different views on the potential

impact of the contemporary processes of change on both the nature and role of the border itself and on the places and people that exist next to each other in the borderlands. The seminars also used the focus on the Scotland–North of England cross-border relationship as a lens through which to explore more conceptual approaches to understanding borders and borderlands.

This introduction will examine the main characteristics of the Anglo–Scottish border and capture the nature of contemporary border change. It will then focus on the cross-border relationship between Scotland and the North of England before highlighting the key themes of the six articles contained in this special issue. It will conclude by examining how debates on the Anglo–Scottish border, and its borderlands, can be located within recent attempts to reconceptualize borders and bordering.

### A Particular Kind of Border?

The increasing public and political engagement with the issue of Scottish independence within the UK and internationally (Walker 2014) has put the spotlight firmly on the border line itself and calls for a reappraisal of how the Anglo-Scottish border has been traditionally viewed. As part of such a reappraisal, it is worthwhile, at the outset, to acknowledge that the boundary line—running 96 miles (154 km) across mainland Britain from the Solway Firth in the west and the River Tweed in the east (Figure 1)—is a particular type of border.

Firstly, it has a long history, being arguably one of the oldest surviving borders in the world (Brooks 2014). Prior to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, there had been a number of attempts to separate the British “North” from the “South,” going back as far as the roman Antonine and Hadrianic Walls, and the (albeit shifting) boundaries of the ancient kingdoms of



**Figure 1.** The Anglo-Scottish Border—The Solway to Tweed Line.

Northumbria and Cumbria/Strathclyde (Barrow 1966). However, it is acknowledged that the first official attempt to fix the border on the Solway–Tweed line was in 1237, when the Treaty of York established the formal boundary between the independent kingdoms of Scotland and England. Despite four centuries of conflict and contestation from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the main features of the original border line served as the basis for the boundary between Scotland and England until 1707, when the Treaty of Union finally brought the two together within a United Kingdom.

Secondly, it has served as both an external border between two sovereign countries and an internal boundary within one United Kingdom and experienced both centuries of conflict, followed by over 300 years where it has been both “fixed and peaceable” (Kiely et al. 2000, 2). However, despite the absence of conflict in this period, the border continued to serve as a marker, a symbol of the difference between the two nations as well as being a source of a cross border identity and shared culture amongst the communities that inhabit the Anglo–Scottish borderlands (Robson 2007).

Finally, in understanding the Anglo–Scottish border, we need to acknowledge a complex and contingent process of historical change, take into account its contradictory nature and its important role in shaping the identity and culture of both people and place. This most particular type of border can be viewed as having four distinguishing features, each contributing to its distinctiveness and to an explanation of how it has been reshaped by the contemporary process of change.

### *The Contested Border*

Although cross-border conflicts go as far back as Roman times, hostilities between the kingdoms of England and Scotland were particularly fierce between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. For Robson (2007, 51), the English crown in particular viewed the borders as “a remote battleground where national ambitions could be fought over,” which according to one writer, effectively “destroyed the lives of everyone who lived alongside it” (Stewart 2014, 2). Indeed, the Anglo–Scottish borderlands in the late medieval and early modern period constituted, “a highly contested region, a militarized zone” (Terrell and Bruce 2012, 3) and were the location of dozens of bloody battles between the rival kingdoms.

One eminent historian has noted that between 1040 and the battle of Culloden in 1746 “every monarch in London except three either had to repel a Scottish invasion of England, or chose to invade Scotland, or in some cases did both of these things” (Colley 2014). This period included the defeat of the Scots at the battle of Flodden in 1513 which saw 10,000 Scots killed, including nine earls, 13 barons, five heirs to titles, three bishops, two abbots and the King of Scotland, James IV. As usually was the case, such battles followed cross-border invasions aiming to acquire parts of each other’s territory. In turn, this often meant changes in the border line itself. Although the 1237 Treaty of York settled most of the major disputes on where the boundary should be drawn, conflict over some areas remained, such as the “Debateable Lands” (north of Carlisle in the West) and the area around the town of Berwick in the east, with the latter, one of the four original Burghs of Scotland, changing hands 14 times before finally becoming part of England in 1482.

In addition, the border was often the scene of cross-border cattle raids and skirmishes between powerful families with famous border names as the Armstrongs, Fenwicks,

Grahams, Elliots, Nixons, Charltons, Milburns and Dodds. These “Reivers” were the “armed and mounted raiders who, until the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, preyed upon their neighbours, no matter which side of the border, stealing cattle and sheep, burning houses and slaughtering any who resisted them” (Crofton 2014, 41). For over 300 years (until the 1550s) the “Debatable Lands” were effectively controlled by local clans, such as the Armstrongs, who successfully resisted any attempt by the Scottish or English governments to impose their authority. The authorities on both sides of border were so intent on curbing lawlessness in this small area that they made the—rather fearsome—proclamation in 1551 that:

All Englishmen and Scottishmen are, and shall be, free to burn, spoil, slay, murder, and destroy all and every person or persons their bodies, buildings, goods and cattle as do remain or shall inhabit upon any part of the said Debatable Lands without any redress to be made for the same. (quoted in Robson 2007, 33)

Following the 1603 Union of the Crowns (under James VI of Scotland/ James 1<sup>st</sup> of England) and the 1707 Act of Union, the Anglo–Scottish Border became an internal border. However, some disputes over land—and the path of the border line itself—still remained well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One exemplar of the contested nature of the border in this period is the status of the border town of Berwick upon Tweed. Even though formally in England, the town continued to have a degree of independence through its long status as a Free Burgh, which meant it was referred to separately from Great Britain and Ireland in official documents, such as Acts of Parliament. This anomaly survived until 1885 when it became formally integrated within the English county of Northumberland. Crofton notes that as late as 2002, a two acre patch of Scottish territory was discovered to actually lie on the English side of the river Liddel (the established border line). This anomaly—caused by an engineering problem when the Waverly train line was constructed in 1861—only came to light when the purchaser of land in the area found that specialist legal knowledge was required from both English and Scottish lawyers (Crofton 2014, 59). As Welsh summarizes, “the precise location of the Borderline gave considerable aggravation to communities immediately on either side of it until the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the tidying up of minor peculiarities and anomalies continues until this day” (Welsh 2013, 3).

Despite the end of violent battles and the diminution in territorial disputes, more contemporary debates on the border have inherited narratives rooted in the conflictual past. Such narratives have then been used to structure more contemporary debates on the nature of the border and provide a lens through which issues, long dismissed as irrelevant and anachronistic, are considered anew.

For example, as the “Yes” campaign gained momentum in the last weeks before the referendum vote in September 2014, the possibility that the border would be transformed back, from an internal boundary within the UK, to an international border between two sovereign states, produced alarm amongst sections of the public and political parties alike. For some, a “Yes” vote would lead to border guards and passport controls on a border-crossing hitherto marked only by signage giving visitors a “warm welcome” to Scotland or inviting them to *Haste ye back* (The Independent 2014). At the other end of the spectrum, less than three weeks after the UK General Election in May 2015, over 40,000 people signed a petition which asked the UK Government to allow the North of England to join Scotland in a break away from a London-dominated England. The “Take us with you

Scotland” campaign argued that the border of a “New” Scotland should be drawn along a line that stretches from Chester in the north west of England to Hull in east Yorkshire (BBC 2015).

### **A “Hybrid” Border**

While it has been an internal border within the United Kingdom for over 300 years, prior to 1707 the Anglo–Scottish line served as an international border separating the two sovereign kingdoms of England and Scotland. Given this history, it is not surprising that the border remains as something of a hybrid. Thus, even though the 1707 Act of Union removed Scotland’s formal independence, the Scots always retained some important trappings of nationhood:

Three things determined and maintained the difference ... the first was religion. The Presbyterian Church of Scotland was at once more severe and more democratic than the Church of England. The second was law. Scots law was founded in Roman law – or Romano-Dutch law – and so advocates and judges tended to argue from first principles rather than precedent, unlike their counterparts in England. The third was education, for Scotland had a school in every parish two centuries at least before England. (Massie 2014, 2)

Similarly, Barrow, writing in the 1960s argued that despite the 1707 Act of Union, the border had not “become extinct” and remained in some areas, a national frontier, with administrative validity, a legal divide, and which still “enshrines and perpetuates a multitude of emotions whose roots lie far back in our history” (Barrow 1966, 21).

Linda Colley in her recent work, *Acts of Union and Disunion*, has argued that for most of the period after 1707, Scottish national consciousness continued to survive and found a secure place within the “language and rituals of Britishness.” This included the role Scots—and Scottish culture—played in the building of the British Empire. Even where campaigns for greater Scottish influence over Westminster did arise in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they were usually tempered by support for the monarchy and the union. Thus, from this perspective, recent times aren’t characterized by a rise in nationalism but the growth of a “different kind of nationalism that sees being part of an England-dominated UK as a form of colonisation and oppression” (Colley 2014).

In this sense, Scotland (similar to the Basques and the Quebecois) has survived as a “stateless nation” (Brunet-Jailly 2005, 639) a distinct entity that has been territorially integrated within the British state but which has tenaciously held on to some of the key attributes and symbols of nationhood, including a reservoir of emotions, feelings and identities, that can be reactivated and renewed when the circumstances dictate. As one of the SNP’s most renowned politicians, Winnie Ewing MSP, proclaimed when she opened the new Scottish Parliament in 1999, “The Scottish Parliament, adjourned on the 25th day of March in the year 1707, is hereby reconvened” (The Scotsman 1999).

### **The “Reiver Mentality”: Borderers and Borderlands**

Centuries of conflict and contestation have also contributed to the forging of a distinctive identity rooted in shared experiences as “borderers.” The common legacy of border conflicts is captured to this day in a living Border landscape that is replete with battle grounds (such as Flodden Field), ruined castles and fortifications, ransacked monasteries and

abbeys, monuments to those slain in battle and by fortified mediaeval dwellings such as Tower Houses (Maxwell-Irving 2011).

The historical roots of distinctiveness are also seen in the unique Borders legal code (or “Marcher Law”) which stemmed from the attempt to impose a measure of order in early modern times. The need to try and impose the rule of law along the border during this period saw the appointment from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards of Lord Wardens of the Marches covering the West, Middle and East sections on both sides of the borderline. The Wardens attempted to dispense justice on the basis of a set of Border laws often based on previous border customs and practices. These included the law of the “hot trod” in which the aggrieved individuals could cross the border for up to 6 days after the theft to legally recover his missing cattle. Similarly, a law-breaker escaping across the border could seek sanctuary—and avoid being taken back—by ringing the bells in the first church he found on the other side of the border (Banks 1977; Crofton 2014; Robson 2007).

For some, this shared history of conflict past has also produced Border communities with a strong sense of “alertness, self-reliance and resilience in the face of multiple enemies” (Banks 1977). For one writer, the history of English–Scottish conflict meant that people living in the border “frontier- zone” needed to be:

Prudent and as flexible in their allegiances if they wanted to survive and prosper. The fact of the frontier means they must be ready always to bend with the prevailing wind. They must be ready to make a friend in every adverse circumstance. Borderers are first of all, borderers, and, only secondarily, Scottish or English. (Welsh 2013, 4)

This sense of identity—as “borderers”—has continued in modern times. A recent visitor to the border in 2014—just before the Independence referendum—noted that “at no point did I meet anyone who stressed their identity as either English or Scottish, instead their identity appeared derived from an affinity with the people of the border regions and their shared history” (Knox 2014, 1).

Borderers have also shared a cultural heritage which, again, is deeply rooted in the past. Stewart describes how, from the 6<sup>th</sup> century to early in the 11<sup>th</sup> century:

the ancient kingdom of Northumbria which stretched from Edinburgh in the North to York in the South had its own kings, languages, arts and literature and religion, while a wonderful cross-border culture also survived to the west in the Kingdom of Strathclyde which covered the area from Loch Lomond in the North to the kingdom of first, Rheged, and then Cumbria in the south. (Stewart 2014, 2)

Even during the height of the conflicts in the late medieval and early modern period, the border was still a place of “cultural contact and exchange” (Terrell and Bruce 2012, 3). This shared culture and identity continues today, as a number of border towns have “Common Ridings,” festivals within which local residents ride out of town on horseback to relive the times when their ancestors would try and protect their land by riding alongside its boundaries. The ballads of Border Reivers survive and are passed down from generation to generation. One of the most famous is the “Ballad of Kinmont Willie”—otherwise known as William Armstrong of Kinmont, a notorious border reiver whose escape from Carlisle castle at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century almost provoked a conflict between England and Scotland (Robson 2007). As Pike summarizes, in the Anglo–Scottish border areas:

Economy, society and polity have long been shared – celebrated in the often romanticised stories, songs and poems passed down as part of the Reivers Tradition – and have underpinned the evolution of a distinct regional entity. (Pike 2002, 1069)

### *A Politicized Border*

While the increasing political salience of the issue of Scottish independence, and the rise in the electoral fortunes of the SNP, can be viewed as being relatively recent, it is important to recognize that the nationalist case for an independent Scotland has long historical roots.

In one sense, the case for Independence goes as far back as the unification with England in 1707. The view that the Scots who put their names to the Act of Union had been bribed, provoked no less a person than Robert Burns to write that, “We are bought and sold for English gold - such a parcel of rogues in a nation” (Martin 2006, 1).

In a more contemporary context, the political movement for independence can be traced back to several organizations in the 1920s and 1930s. These organizations, including the Scots National League (NPS) and the Glasgow University Scottish Nationalist Association combined to form the National Party of Scotland in 1928—one of the founder members being the borders-born Hugh MacDiarmid, one of Scotland’s greatest 20<sup>th</sup> century writers. In turn, the NPS merged with the Scottish Party in 1934 to create the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP). The SNP did win a Parliamentary seat as early as 1945, but it was in the late 1960s and 1970s that they started to become a force in UK elections. Pressures from the nationalists—and from some Scottish Labor MPs—saw the UK Labor Government in the late 1970s agreeing not to full independence, but to the devolution of some powers to a new Scottish Assembly which would have a limited legislative role in areas such as education and housing. However, in 1979 the 40% referendum vote needed to carry the day was not achieved which ensured that the proposal was not implemented (Mclean, Gallagher, and Lodge 2013).

There is no doubt however, that despite the issues long lineage, the contemporary rise of Scottish nationalism, and the increasing devolution of power to Scotland over the last two decades, have served to reignite the debate on independence for Scotland and increased the political significance of the Anglo–Scottish border itself.

After 1997, the Labor Government’s commitment to territorial devolution within the UK led to the creation of a Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh with its own elected members and a range of devolved powers (Cairney 2011). In practice, this allowed the Scottish Parliament effective control of many areas of domestic policy and also included some tax-varying powers. The scale of devolution—and of divergence from the rest of the UK—is most clearly reflected in the decisions north of the Border to abolish university tuition fees, to continue state support for elderly care, and to have their own approach to teacher’s pay. More recently, the 2012 Scotland Act implemented a number of the recommendations of the 2007–2009 Calman Commission on Scottish Devolution which argued for a series of additional devolved responsibilities. These included a Scottish rate of income tax, new borrowing powers for the Scottish Government, and full control of stamp duty land tax and landfill tax (Commission on Scottish Devolution 2009)

The creation of the new devolved Parliament after 1997 was also of crucial importance as it provided a platform within which demands for even greater autonomy, including full-blown independence for Scotland, could be articulated by the SNP. Following their

decisive victory in the 2011 elections for the Scottish Parliament, the SNP government in Edinburgh saw this vote as a clear mandate for the holding of an Independence Referendum, and after consultation with the UK Coalition Government, it was agreed to hold such a vote on September 18, 2014 (Mitchell 2014).

In the week before the Referendum vote, when opinion polls suggested that the momentum was with the “Yes” campaign, the three main UK party leaders made their “Vow” that if the Scots were willing to reject Independence they would commit to delivering extensive new powers “faster” and “safer” than could be offered by the “Yes” campaign (Daily Record 2014). Following the recommendations of the Smith Commission, which had been set up immediately following the Referendum result, the UK Government announced its proposals for greater Scottish devolution early in 2015 (HMG 2015). The proposals, while not satisfying those committed to an independent Scotland, did offer the most comprehensive package of devolution ever offered within the UK—a political system traditionally viewed as one of the most centralized in Western Europe. The 2015 Scotland Bill not only involves fiscal devolution (on the rates and bands of income tax, Air Passenger Duty and the Aggregates Levy, and assignment of VAT revenues), but also increases Scots responsibility for welfare policies, for onshore oil and gas extraction and increases the ability to design schemes relating to energy efficiency and fuel poverty (UK Parliament 2015).

### The Changing Relationship Between Scotland and the North of England

This Introduction can now employ Scotland’s cross-border relationships with the North East England as a lens through which we can examine the changing nature of the Anglo–Scottish Border. Such a relationship is deeply rooted in history, underpinned by a shared sense of identity and common culture, and characterized by an often complex relationship involving conflict, contestation, and collaboration.

As we have seen, for over 400 years, Northern England was (rightfully) concerned about invasion or raiding parties from the North. In more modern times, the region’s fear of the Scots has been less about the threat of invasion and more about how a more powerful Scotland would undermine the economic development opportunities open to the North East, as the former would have devolved powers that were not available to the latter.

In the run-up to the 2014 referendum, North Eastern political and business leaders became increasingly concerned, if not fearful, that Scotland could gain greater control over the levers of economic development and hence become significantly more attractive as a location for inward investment to the detriment of the North of England (Shaw 2014). This anxiety is also the product of the increasingly stark contrast between a powerful Scotland and the much reduced powers of the English Regions. In the latter, the post-2010 abolition of both the well-resourced and powerful Regional Development Agencies and the coordinating administrative hubs, The Government Offices for the Regions, has arguably undermined the capacity for regional voice and reduced the resources and strategic cohesion needed to plan for regional economic growth in England (Shaw and Robinson 2012).

However, the impact of developments north of the border has not always been negative. The North East’s reassertion of its own political identity (from the late 1980s onwards) is a response in large measure to the renewed salience of the Anglo–Scottish Border in UK

politics as a result of devolution, and illustrates how the presence of the border has also helped heighten awareness of the common bond between Northern England and Scotland. This is not just a product of geography, including the daily cross-border flows of people for work shopping or family visits, but also reflects shared experiences of economic and industrial change and what some have seen as a common commitment to economic and social justice (Shaw 2015). There is also a strong shared sense of being on the periphery: a long way from the center of economic and political power in London (and in Edinburgh). Hence, the independence debate has prompted organizations and individuals on both sides of the border to consider new, collaborative, cross-border approaches. Scotland's closest English neighbors are now "looking northwards" to assess how economic development in the North East can benefit from a stronger Scotland through enhanced cross-border collaboration (Shaw, Robinson, and Blackie 2014).

The Scottish Government also views greater collaboration with northern England as important, and has been keen to emphasize that a more powerful Scotland would not only maintain close ties to the North of England, but that independence would also offer new opportunities for collaboration and joint-working. Scotland's former First Minister spoke of the region as "our closest friends in economic and social terms" (Alex Salmond MSP, quoted in *The Journal* 2012).

Some in Northern England feel that a resurgent Scotland poses a considerable threat to economic development south of the border. Others are genuinely interested in reappraising the cross-border relationship, examining areas of mutual benefit and considering making common cause with Scotland in a centralized political system dominated by the interests of London and the South East. This focus on the border being both a "barrier" and a "gateway" is captured by Pike in his study of cross-border economic relationship following the devolution initiatives after 1997, when he argues that the border served to both:

create issues that divide, such as inter-territorial economic competition, rival claims to resources and variations in political 'voice', but also those that unite, such as common problems and/or assets, economic linkages and a shared cultural identity. (Pike 2002, 1079).

It is these issues that provided the context for the ESRC seminar series: "Close Friends": Assessing the Impact of Greater Scottish Autonomy on the North of England.

### "Close Friends"? The ESRC Seminar Series

The articles in this special issue all contribute to a major reinterpretation of the Anglo-Scottish Border and draw on a range of insights from a number of different disciplines.

In locating the contemporary relationship between Scotland and the North of England within a wider historical context, Iain Mclean looks at the contemporary roots of the hostility between the North of England and Scotland in his article, *The "No Men of England": Tyne and Wear County Council and the failure of the Scotland and Wales Acts 1978*. The article establishes that the very recent concerns over a stronger Scotland are not new, and date back to the mid/late 1970s when politicians in the North East of England were opposed to the form of the devolution agenda being developed by the then Labor Government. These local and national politicians strongly held the view that a more powerful Scotland would inevitably undermine the economic fortunes of the North of England

and supported an amendment to the 1978 Scotland Act which in practice ensured that any devolutionary arrangements were effectively scuppered for a generation. Mclean's article also captures the origins of the much-derided territorial public funding mechanism, the "Barnett Formula," and how its subsequent bias in favor of Scotland (in comparison to the level of allocations in the North East), has served both to reinforce the region's antipathy towards the Scots and, more generally, influenced subsequent debates on issues of fiscal devolution.

Looking at the border in terms of its cultural significance, Ysanne Holt's article, *Performing the Anglo-Scottish Border: Cultural Landscapes, Heritage and Borderland Identities* examines how the referendum campaign drew sharp attention to the cultural identity of the border regions. This "cultural turn" saw creative artists both reconceptualizing the significance of the border and reaching out to work with environmentalists and archaeologists who have a shared interest in the inter-relationship of people and place. Drawing upon a number of case studies of arts projects motivated by the independence debate, she assesses recent cultural debates on the representation and experience of Northern peripheries and border regions, spaces typically conceived as remote and marginal, but which can be alternatively seen as hybrid and generative spaces where dynamic and diverse networks can develop that are both local and global in their connections.

Keith Shaw's article, *'Northern Lights': An Assessment of the Political and Economic Challenges Facing North East England in the Context of Greater Scottish Autonomy* analyses how recent political developments north of the border have been viewed in the North East of England. He outlines how the region's anxieties over a more powerful neighbor were compounded by the growing hostility towards Scotland as the SNP virtually wiped out of Labor MP's in Scotland in the May 2015 General Election. In contrast, the article also charts how the North East of England has used the situation to strengthen its own case to Westminster for greater devolved powers and, secondly, to explore opportunities for a more collaborative, cross-border approach to economic development. The article concludes by highlighting how the border itself can be seen less as a "barrier" and more as a "bridge"—an enabling mechanism which brings opportunities to forge new cross-border relationships.

In their article, *Cross-border Collaboration in Economic Development: Institutional Change on the Anglo-Scottish Border*, Frank Peck and Gail Mulvey use a focus on cross-border regional innovation systems to illustrate how institutional changes over time—and the nature of the external economic environment—can alter the balance between symmetries and asymmetries that characterize cross-border relationships. Focussing on a comparison of two time periods and institutional configurations in the recent history of the Anglo-Scottish border, the article captures the complexity of the motivations underpinning collaborative working and how the balance and intensity of such motivations can realign in the face of shifting economic and political pressures. The article concludes by highlighting the importance of further comparative research on the way in which different types of governance arrangements for cross-border working evolve over time and the types of policy instruments that are used to facilitate collaboration in different circumstances.

The final two articles both place the relationship between Scotland and the North of England within a wider international literature on borders and bordering.

Ruth Taillon's article, *Cross-Border Issues in Ireland: Lessons for the Anglo-Scottish Border* draws upon extensive research on the Northern Ireland–Republic of Ireland

border. In assessing the effectiveness of the myriad of cross-border approaches institutionalized following the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, she illustrates how many of the key challenges on both sides on the international border require co-operative action across different jurisdictions and benefit from effective partnerships, the pooling of resources and exchanging learning and good practice. In highlighting the crucial importance of achieving the political will to collaborate across borders, and of prioritizing systemic capacity building, the article concludes by highlighting the significance for cross-border relations across the whole UK as a result of the countries' decision to leave the EU in the June 2016 referendum.

The final article offers a *European Perspective on Anglo-Scottish Cross-border Co-operation* by drawing upon insights from the EU's territorial cooperation programs. In the article, Claire Columb charts the history of EU transboundary initiatives, their changing rationale and the different impacts claimed for trans-boundary cooperation. Drawing from EU experiences, she identifies the main challenges in such collaborative approaches and considers how cross-border cooperation practices successfully addressed pressing territorial, economic and social development issues, and led to innovative forms of collaboration between public, private and civil society actors across borders. When applied to the Anglo-Scottish context, the article both stresses the opportunities for crafting new non-statutory spatial visions within "soft planning spaces" and how visions for cross-border co-operation can be driven from the grass-roots, rather than the central state. It also cautions however, that present attempts at collaboration across the Anglo-Scottish border will need to confront a number of asymmetries in relation to powers, resources, and institutional capacity.

Whatever, their particular focus, and their different disciplinary contributions to the understanding of borders, a key theme running through all the contributions in this special issue is the question of *what the recent major political changes in Britain mean for Scotland's relationship with the other component parts of the UK*. While some contributors are cautious (given the scale of policy differentiation and administrative asymmetries) about heralding a new era of cross-border collaboration, others view the discursive or policy "space" created since 2014 as an enabling route through which new ways of working can be crafted and new cross-border solutions contemplated. Whatever side of the debate they are on however; all agree that continuing political support, mutual trust and the identification of (realistic) shared benefits are central to the outcome.

## New Approaches to Borders and Bordering

A particularly interesting thing about borders in the contemporary context is that they are often constructed in new ways, in a variety of locations, by diverse types of people. This means that looking afresh at some basic, what, where and who questions is an important part of the Critical Border Studies agenda. (Rumford 2012, 887–888)

In considering how the nature of the Anglo-Scottish border has been affected by the major political events of the last two years, we are mindful of the importance of the key question raised by Jones, as long ago as 1958, "how are borders to be redefined in the settings of contemporary time and place" (quoted in Newman 2003, 13). In aiming to bring the Anglo-Scottish border "back in," it is important to highlight the common ground between this endeavor and recent attempts to reconceptualize borders within a more

critical border studies. This burgeoning literature stresses the importance of: capturing their dynamic nature; utilizing an interdisciplinary (or “multi-perspectival” approach); appreciating their competing and contradictory material and symbolic meanings; and being critical of the assumption that they have usually taken the form of a line drawn between two states (see for example: Anderson and O’Dowd 1999; Brunet-Jailly 2005; Newman 2003; Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2009; Rumford 2012).

In examining the contemporary debates on borders, there are five areas where our study of the dynamic nature of the Anglo–Scottish border chimes with the themes of a critical border studies and where new insights can add to our understanding of border change.

### ***Beyond Territorialism***

In a seminal article, David Newman highlights how a new generation of border studies should move beyond the “traditional description of territorial boundary delimitation and demarcation” (Newman 2003, 22). In a similar vein, others are critical of the privileging of a “territorialist epistemology” which principally views a border as “a territorially fixed, static line” (Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2009, 586).

As noted earlier, the Anglo–Scottish border tends to defy traditional ways of defining borders based on natural features, or fixed border lines. While the borderline does follow some natural features, such as streams, rivers and watersheds, it is (as Robson argues) primarily there because “someone decided to put it there” (Robson 2007, 19). In this sense, the boundary itself was not fixed once and for all, at one particular date in time, but was the eventual result of a convoluted history, innumerable battles and conflicts and subsequent bi-lateral agreements. For Crofton, it was thus a:

matter of historical accident, diplomatic fixing and legal wheeler-dealing that the people of Northumbria and Cumbria find themselves in England and the people of Berwickshire and Roxburghshire find themselves in Scotland. (Crofton 2014, 13)

In rejecting any underpinning geographic, military or ethnic rationales for the designation for the border, one writer has concluded that, “there is no clear answer to the question of why the border line has been placed where it has – it could just have easily been put somewhere else” (Welsh 2013, 4).

### ***Internal Borders Matter***

New approaches to understanding borders also highlight how the primary focus on borders as international boundaries separating sovereign states now needs to recognize that so-called “internal” borders also matter. Put simply:

The study of borders has moved away from an almost exclusive concern with the borders between States in the international system, to the study of borders at diverse socio-spatial and geographical scales, ranging from the local and the municipal, to the global, regional and supra-State compartmentalization of the world. (Kolossoff 2012, 3)

The role and significance of internal borders between “stateless nations” are now at the center of a number of key debates (Rumford 2012), and can be seen as just as complex, diverse and contradictory as state boundaries.

As one recent contribution to the Anglo-Scottish debate notes:

One might think that because England and Scotland are part of the same state ... this is not a meaningful border in political-legal terms any more. But it is: not simply because since 1999 there is a (domestic) Scottish Parliament, and since 2007 a nationalist government in Scotland, but because there are continuing and meaningful jurisdictional differences. (McCrone and Bechhofer 2015, 71)

### *“Borderlands”*

Borders can act as barriers to movement and interaction, creating difference and division. However they also possess “connective potential” (Rumford 2008) and have the potential to act as gateways which integrate and unite. In particular, the areas surrounding borders —“borderlands”—can be viewed as “zones of interaction” where people on one side of the border can “share values, beliefs, feelings and expectations with people on the other side of the border” (Konrad and Nicol 2008, 32). In this view, the border is less a “line of separation” but more “a local set of interconnected values” (Rumford 2012, 896).

Thus, changes in the nature of borders can have a particular impact on the areas that abut the border, as they are home to the communities who are directly affected by the existence of the border itself. As one study of borders argues:

While classical studies of the border have concentrated on the line which separates, divides and constitutes a barrier, border studies have increasingly switched their focus from the line to the region, on both sides of the border, which is impacted by the existence of the order. This has been defined, depending on the discipline, as a border space, border region, a frontier, a transition region, a cross-border region, and the like. (Kolossoff 2012, 30)

Focusing on Anglo-Scottish border communities in the recent referendum campaign is interesting in this context. In the run-up to the 2014 referendum, one borderer (who lived 4 miles into England) announced his opposition to independence as:

... all our services here come from across the border. Post, telephone, electric, doctor, dentist, hospital. The only thing we do not have in Scotland is a solicitor, as it is a different legal system ... we are borderers and affinity to London or Edinburgh is less important than affinity to the borders. (quoted in The Journal 2014)

It is also interesting to note that in the Referendum itself, the two local council areas in Scotland which had the largest “No” vote (both 66%) were the border areas of Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders. This firm rejection of an independent Scotland can be seen as being, at least partly, influenced by the desire to maintain their common identity as Borderers, when faced with the potentially divisive implications of an international border. As Stothart (2014, 1) notes, it is in the:

unifying middle-land of residents with close ties to the north of England, that the pro-independence Yes campaign faced its toughest challenge in winning votes in the referendum on whether Scotland should be an independent country.

### *Borders as Symbols*

Given that borders and borderlands are essentially “human creations” (Brunet-Jailly 2005, 633), the study of borders will necessarily examine the representations, images and

narratives that people have of the borders that separate them. Hence borders are as much about, “ideas, metaphors and states of mind” (Robson 2007, 129) than fixed territorial boundaries, and can have both “material and symbolic importance” (Anderson and O’Dowd 1999, 594). A deeper understanding of borders would thus focus on how they are captured through a range of images, from “real life landscapes” to “art and literature” (Newman 2003, 20), while such symbolism can also lead to borders serving as “sites of cultural encounter” (Rovisco 2010).

Issues of identity are central to an understanding of the Anglo–Scottish border. For the people whose lives have been shaped by the line itself, the presence of the existing Borderline is a sign (both materially and symbolically) of what binds them together, not what divides them. There are also a number of recent examples in the Anglo–Scottish case, where borderland monuments have served to symbolize different (and highly contested) interpretations of the border—meanings which can both connect and divide.

One graphic example is the “Auld Acquaintance” cairn at Gretna which was erected in the months preceding the Scottish referendum in 2014, as a symbol of unity and support for Scotland’s place in the United Kingdom. Launched by Rory Stewart, a local MP, the project saw tens of thousands of people travel to Gretna from across the United Kingdom—and further afield—to lay approximately 130,000 stones in support of the Union, many of them painted with messages, poems and names, reflecting love for Scotland and the United Kingdom. However, by summer 2015 it was discovered that the cairn had subsequently been vandalized by those opposed to maintaining the Union (Jack 2015).

### **Conclusions: “Never the Same”—The Growing Significance of the Anglo-Scottish Border**

Given the extensive change in UK politics in a relatively short time, it is hard to see the move towards greater Scottish independence losing momentum. Nor will the Anglo–Scottish border line itself revert back to its former role as a largely invisible boundary not recognized by the thousands who cross back and forward each day. The complacent view of the UK government that the referendum vote removed Scottish independence from the political agenda “for a generation,” the perceived failure to deliver on the pledge of extra powers for the Scottish parliament and the withdrawal of the UK from the EU following the UK referendum result in 2016, all led the former SNP leader Alex Salmond to recently state that a second independence referendum is now “inevitable” (The Independent 2016).

The growing public interest in the issue, coupled with an increased intensity of political debates on what additional powers should be devolved to Scotland, has contributed to a growing consensus that, in the long run, the changes in the relationship between England and Scotland will mark a fundamental shift in the nature of the Union set up in 1707. Indeed, it is likely that the process of change will not only further re-enforce the divergence between the two, but will also potentially push the UK further down the road towards a more federal political system in which Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and even the regions of England, become much more autonomous. Indeed, the momentous events of the last two years may even prefigure the eventual break-up of the United Kingdom into separate states (Colley 2014).

From this perspective, what the articles in this issue capture is a very distinctive type of border on the cusp of a dynamic period of change. In identifying within this “process of bordering” (Newman 2003), Scotland’s existing relationship with its “close cousins” in the North of England, the contributions in this issue offer insights as to how the existing cross-border relationship based on common bonds and affiliations can be renewed in the context of a more powerful Scotland *within* the UK. However, this special issue may also capture an internal border that is part-way to returning to the status of an external border between sovereign states that has not existed since 1707. Interesting times indeed.

## Endnote

1. The Principal Investigator for the seminar series was Professor Keith Shaw, Northumbria University, Newcastle, UK. His Co-Investigators were: Professor John Tomaney, Bartlett School of Planning, University College London; Professor Iain McLean, Nuffield College, University of Oxford; Professor Frank Peck University of Cumbria; Dr Angela McClanahan, University of Edinburgh College of Art; Professor Ysanne Holt, Northumbria University, Newcastle, UK

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