Imagining Border and borderland

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Outline

- Background
  - What is border?
  - Importance of border
- Shifts in imagining border
- Border region / borderland
- Conclusion

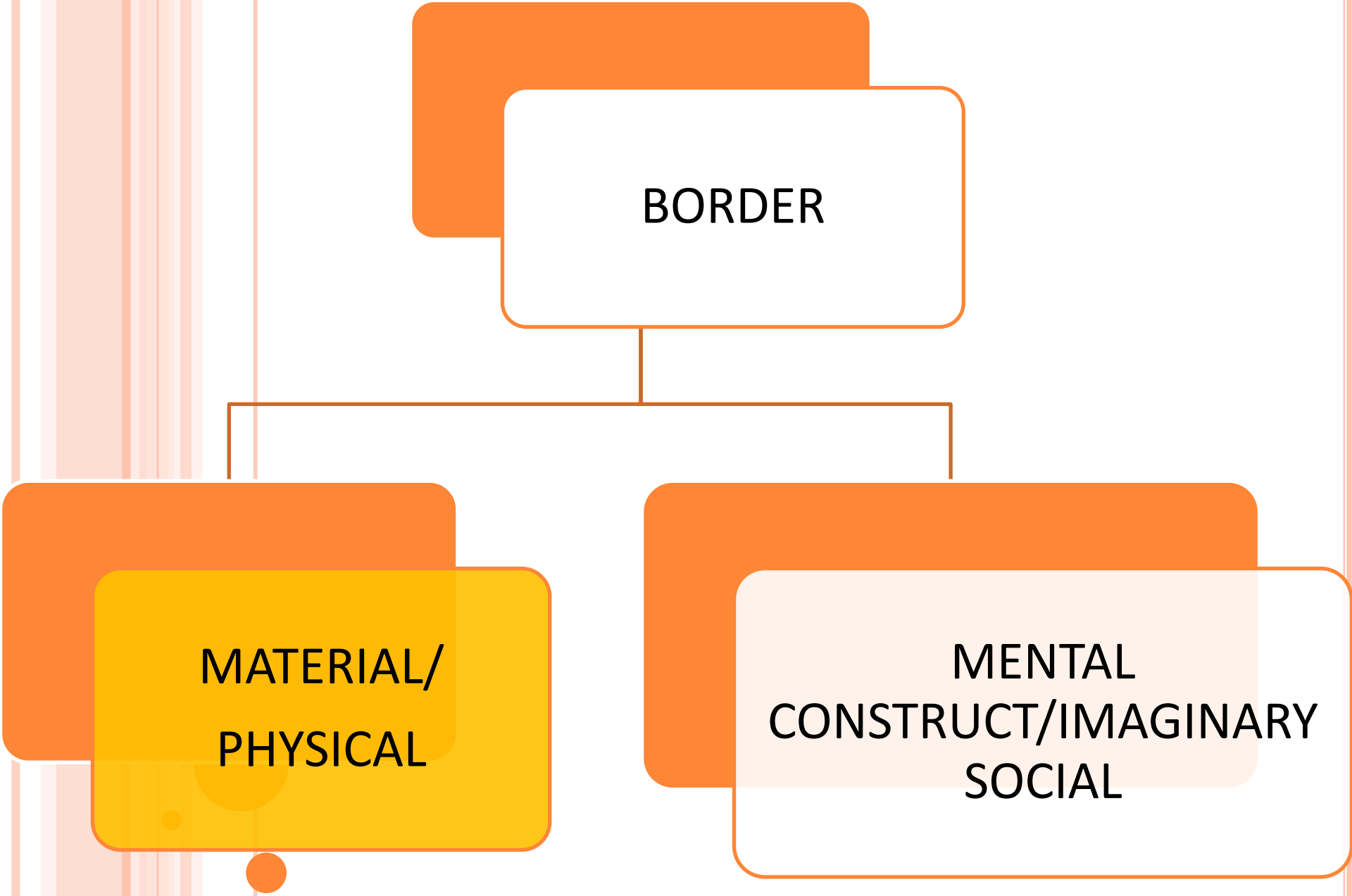
BACKGROUND

- Concerned with the incorporation of border communities in the space of the nation-state formation and globalization
- The extent of integration at borderlands is a reflection of the wider integration as an ASEAN community

What is border?

- Border is a boundary mark or line between two entities/spaces or sovereign states.

- Vs Frontiers
  - assumed to constitute the area in proximity to the border whose internal development was affected by the existence of this line


BORDER
MATERIAL/
PHYSICAL
MENTAL
CONSTRUCT/IMAGINARY
SOCIAL

Shifts in imagining border

Conventional	*Alternative*
Borders as boundaries	**Sense of bordering (socially constructed)**
Physical/fixed boundaries (space of places)	**Permeable/fluid boundaries (space of flows)**
Line of separation/outsider	**Line of contact/ cooperation/insider**
Separate space with single national identity	**Shared space with multiple identities**
Literalist approach	**Metaphorical/a-literalist approach**

BORDER AS FIXED BOUNDARY

- State boundary
  - State imagined borders – from the centre
    - state defined physical boundaries
    - state sovereignty
  - Legitimized and institutionalized
    - nation state imposes strict rules and regulation
    - static statist concepts and terms, taken-for-granted concepts of nation
  - Border control policies – tax/customs, goods, people
    - Ex. state policies of border population and migration, citizenship requirements
      - concerning social/people movement

Effect of fixed boundary/identity

- policies, rules and regulations cause difficulties and challenges to the communities in the conduct of their daily activities, and create social problems - hence, social and economic marginalisation may be experienced while being incorporated and integrated into the space of nation-state and mainstream society by the state
- some of the border people are from ethnic minorities whose ethnic and cultural backgrounds are considered as challenging the imposition of national identity and culture, and national integration in the larger society by the nation state

BORDER AS SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

- According to Horstmann (2002) border as
  - laboratory of social and cultural change
    - Baud and van Schendel (1997) suggest that borderlands should be seen as social and cultural systems which transcend the state boundary and which have been active in the construction of their states
  - contradictions of representation of bounded collectivities
  - borders has produced and invented ethnic minorities which have been forced into marginal positions on the frontier of the nation-state

BORDERS AS SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

- Suited to daily needs – need reworking
  - power and autonomy challenged by border people who constantly redefine, give own meanings, shape/transform marginal spaces (state margins) to suit their daily needs
  - they "define & redefine the relations between social and physical space" (Hortsmann,2002)
- Borders imagined in relation to other communities
- Border networks are blurred
- Complementary economic need and exchange
- porous, permeable and ambigious (culturally, socially, symbolically)

BORDERS AS SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

- the border communities work their way around (manipulate) the rules , regulations and policies in order to get on with their lives and activities – they rework and make use of the borders to their advantage - they constantly give their own meanings on borders and shape the state marginal spaces to the extend of making the borders they face and cross (everyday for some) porous and ambigious
- intensive social movements between borders (e.g. migration – legal & illegal) to conduct daily socio-economic and cultural activities

Border Region or Borderland

- ideas of 'area' around borders suggest that borders are attached with borderland or border region.

- 2 models on borderland
  - 1. **Blatter's (2004) dual –borderland**
    - Peripheral Front line
    - Central contact zone
  - 2. **Martinez (1994) continuum borderland**

    continuum of least to most friendly contact
    - Alienated
    - Coexistent
    - Interdependent
    - Integrated

Blatter's (2004) dual –borderland

- a **peripheral 'front line' role**
  - border regions are viewed as the peripheral part of both their respective nation states, playing a 'front line' role between the neighboring countries.
- a **central 'contact zone' role**.
  - active central role as the 'contact zone', enhanced by the socio-economic interdependencies (Blatter, 2004)

Border as peripheral

- Thongchai Winichakul (2000) shows that borders (formation of the territorial Thai geo-body) implies:
  - a hierarchical relationship of the national centre and the other/peripheral border in terms of :
    - Class
    - Status
    - ethno-geography (peripheral ethnicity)

Martinez (1994) continuum borderland

- Alienated
- coexistent
- interdependent
- integrated borderlands

INTERDEPENDENT BORDERLAND

- these border regions tend to have favorable social and economic conditions and the people on both sides of the border often engage in mutually benefiting and friendly ties.
- Both sides of the border are keen in seeking growth through complementary exchange of foreign resources, markets, and labor.
- The economies of both nations are strongly tied to the other as labor and goods cross freely from both sides of the border

INTEGRATED BORDERLAND

- postulates that when free trade and cultures have come together to create their own border culture, a situation of "stability is strong and permanent, the economies of the two countries are functionally merged, and there is unrestricted movement of people and goods across the boundary," (Martinez, 1994)

CONCLUSION

- Shifts in border imagination towards social construction requires a rematerialized postmodern approach where goods and people transacted along borders are not only treated as texts or discursively but also as material culture. In other words examine borders not only as textual and visual cultural codes but as things in the making and things in use, materially and symbolically.
- The idea of borderland is envisaged to move from a peripheral frontline zone towards central contact zone as Blatter suggest.
- Likewise a movement from idea of borderland from the continuum of alienation to integration is postulated by Martinez.

Khob Khun

Thank you