

How to Write a Conclusion for a Research Paper

How did you explain the situation of the border to your department?
Don't let it become normalised for you because if you do, you'll never
be able to explain it to them or capture it in your research.

(Personal conversation, Amastae, May 2005)

On returning to El Paso following some time spent in the U.K., and halfway through my field research, Dr. Jon Amastae greeted me in the CIBS office with the above question. He could not help, he said, but he intrigued as to how I had explained the U.S.-Mexican border to my colleagues in the U.K. This short comment underscored for me the importance of interrogating the (re)production of the border, and not simply accepting it as a static and pre-destined truth or fact of living.

Indeed, the initial puzzle which has driven this thesis is how the border has been produced. In the Introduction, I asked, how is the border? The thesis has argued, above all, that the border is (re)produced as a product of state power which is predicated upon the ability to distinguish between citizen and subaltern lives, or rather, the maintenance and naturalisation of the citizen/ subaltern binary which becomes an invisible logic in everyday life. This, I have argued, helps us to understand how the border can exist as a paradoxical and contradictory space and yet 'make sense' in everyday life. It is precisely this exploration of marginality as being linked to the mutual constitution of state power and the border that has guided and informed the theoretical and empirical aspects of the thesis, and which ultimately highlights the central contributions of the thesis to academic knowledge.

CONTRIBUTIONS

In arguing for a deeper exploration of marginality in International Relations which would displace the hegemonic idea that states and their governments are the most significant actors on the international stage, I have effectively turned IR 'inside-out'. Furthermore, by reading the marginal as the key constitutive element in state power, I have also transposed IR to the level of the everyday which has given rise to an