In this chapter about the Catalan border, I shall use three basic keys for unlocking border shift analysis: memory, the rhythm beaten by a new Europe as it transforms the Catalan border, and the new forms of contemporary mobilities. In a section of its own, I shall spend some time on the influence of memory by going through history chronologically, while the part on a new Europe and contemporary mobilities practices I shall deal with together. Lastly, I shall talk about various case studies that articulate the different types of so-called border shifts.

**Introduction**

Today’s line at the border, the physical border fact between France and Spain, is not what it stood for in times gone by. New actors and new political, economic and social mechanisms have come into play and with them come new ways of imagining nationhood, diverging as it does from the modern nationalism we have already looked at, that sees the coinciding of cultural and politico-national borders linked to the idea of territorial sovereignty. At its core, the liberal European nation-state has arisen out of the processes of decolonialization, to which the notion of territory and nation-statehood was bound, giving it an absolute, central role in international and
intra-state relations. Hence, at its borders, it is not what it used to be – as I was able to prove in the opening chapter.

Neither is the French nation-state, characterized as it is by the nationalist logic it inherited from Jacobinism, the same as it was. Every small empirical study I refer to in this work has a logic that is, on the one hand, very localized and very rooted while, on the other, is framed in never-ending relations that are regional, national, international, inter-communitarian, transnational – immersed in a ‘globalized’ world. But, for all that, a globalized world where the border place is also mixed up with France, Spain, Catalonia and Europe, and gives rise to many circular identities.

Thus, from our strategic vantage post at the border, there are innumerable points for consideration that simultaneously suggest the past and the globalized present: periphery and centre, continuity and discontinuity, the tracks of history, old and new stereotypes, archaic and technological forms of control, clear passage and waiting, contemporary control, cross-border circuits, circuits related to border tourism (think ‘outlets’), the border market and sex tourism. For the latter case, social science researchers have carried out most work along the border between Poland and the Czech Republic (Darley 2009), but we are still waiting for this type of research to be done for Catalonia.

As we saw in the previous chapter, this book reflects recent intra-European research in that we consider the hills and mountains, and even the sea, as forming the modern-day Catalanian frontier space (at the Franco-Spanish borderline). It is also an intra-Pyrenean place that traverses the hills and small mountain ranges. Indeed, as mentioned by the human geographer Lefebvre (1965), the Pyrenean region constitutes a privileged terrain of observation that stimulated new perspectives and orientations, for example, his interest in the social practices of the city. Accordingly, Lefebvre has given importance to the differences between space and the living space; he has also provided clues to the construction of the geographical scale, where place is normally seen as related to the specific and the particular in order to refer to a sense of place.

In the Pyrenees this compartmentalization is produced by many divisions and many languages, including Basque, Catalan, Aragonese, French and Castilian, which forms different, mismatched landscapes. In this sense, the high peaks, such as Pic du Midi (2,877 m) and