

BORDERLANDS: COMPARING BORDER SECURITY IN NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE

EMMANUEL BRUNET-JAILLY, Ed.

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Review by Geoffrey Hale*

Borders are more than geographic abstractions. They are both political and societal constructs that reflect the ways in which national states—and the citizens that at least some of them aspire to serve—define the terms and limits for people, goods, and services to obtain access to national territories.

During the 1990s, trends towards globalization, regionalization, and increasingly 'intense cross-border flows of people and goods' challenged traditional concepts of borders and border administration. However, the past decade has seen a growing emphasis on security and the enforcement of border regulations on travelers, migrants, and trade—not just in North America, but in many other parts of the world. At the same time, it has created major complications for people living in “borderlands”—the often ill-defined zones straddling national boundaries in which the citizens of different countries habitually interact in a variety of contexts.

Indeed, the priorities and perceptions of residents of borderland regions often function at cross-purposes with those of national governments—particularly when the latter seek to manage and control the processes of interdependence characteristic of borderlands in ways that challenge the interests and accustomed patterns of interaction of their residents.

Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly's edited collection *Borderlands: Comparing Border Security in North America and Europe* provides a revealing, theoretically sophisticated study of these challenges in the context of the multiple borderlands of North America and Europe.

Brunet-Jailly conceptualizes borders and borderlands as zones of interaction between "two fundamental elements: human activities (the agency...of individual ties and forces spanning a border), and...broader social processes that frame individual action such as market forces, government activities (law, regulation and policies), and the regional culture and politics of a borderland" (p. 1). The accustomed interaction of individuals and organizations across borders cultivates varying degrees of interdependence that in turn contributes to varying degrees of “porosity,” creating “problem(s) for the makers of security policy” (p. 2). Unilateral or mismatched approaches to security policies—particularly those which fail to engage local populations—foster a “tug of war between culture, local political clout, market forces, and the multiple activities of governments” in structuring borderlands (p. 4).

Brunet-Jailly's multi-dimensional approach to the border recognizes that the interaction of market forces, local cultures, and local political influence across borders can contribute to the growing integration of borderlands or work at cross-purposes to one another. This volume contains a rich cross-section of regional, sector, and policy-specific studies that demonstrate both the commonalities and varieties of borderlands in North America and Europe at several levels of analysis.

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Seven chapters focus on different aspects of North American borderlands—four on the US-Mexico border, one on Canada's security cooperation with the United States, and one on the often neglected Mexico-Guatemala border.

Only Jose Ramos' chapter contrasting US-Mexico and US-Canadian security relations is directly comparative. Three chapters explore borderlands issues in different parts of Europe, and one addresses the “circumpolar” borderlands of the Arctic regions of North America and Eurasia.

The volume's relative emphasis on the US-Mexican border coincides with the intensely polarized, partisan conflict over immigration policies and border enforcement in the United States in 2005-2006. Payan and Vásquez's chapter is effective in applying the volume's theoretical model to four main objects of US security policies along the Mexican border: overall economic activity, the legal cross-border interaction of citizens, and efforts to limit drug smuggling and illegal immigration. Recalling Stephen Flynn's concept of the “hardened border paradox,” they conclude that the costs of these measures have not yielded corresponding improvements in policy outcomes (p. 251) even though both legal and illegal users of the borders have adapted to the new realities (p. 253). Similar themes emerge in Julie Murphy-Erfani's analysis of informal networks to support illegal migrants that have sprung up in response to security measures that have forced migrant routes farther into the inhospitable Sonora-Arizona desert, and in Michael Patrick's analysis of the yet to be fully implemented US VISIT program. Mélissa Gauthier's chapter on the *fayuca hormiga* or “ant trade” in used clothing from the United States to Mexico provides a fascinating counterpoint. It notes the resilience of small-scale smuggling activities into Mexico in response to high local demand for used clothing in response to protectionist trade policies. José Ramos' comparison of domestic policy priorities underpinning US-Mexico and US-Canadian security relations provides a nuanced analysis of the necessity for cross-border cooperation (and the negotiation of competing priorities) for such policies to be effective.

The other chapters on North America and the Arctic are a somewhat uneasy fit with the rest of the book. Patrick Smith's highly detailed analysis of Canada's national security and anti-terrorism policies concludes that, while there have been clear parallels between Canadian and US anti-terrorism policies, Canadian policy processes have produced “significantly different” outcomes in several areas, resulting in a form of “negotiated convergence” (p. 305). Daniel Villafuerte Solis' chapter on Mexico's southern border notes the uneasy coexistence of US security policies, the effects of recent trade agreements in further integrating the countries of Central America within the US sphere of influence, and the “remodelling” of the Mexico's southern border in an effort to limit the flow of migrants through Mexico to the United States.

Heinenen and Nicol's chapter on the Arctic security agenda is, to some degree, a bridge between analyses of North American and European policies—although the peculiar nature of the circumpolar North, which is politically and psychologically peripheral to both regions, is seen to inhabit a world of its own in which “human security” has been allowed to take priority over national or border security since the end of the Cold War. The authors note the absence of environmental issues, central to Arctic concepts of security, from Brunet-Jailly's broader model of security.

The three chapters on European border security policies provide a useful counterpoint to the seeming chaos of US border security policies after 9/11. All are integrated effectively into Brunet-Jailly's theoretical framework. Clochard and Dupeyron's discussion of the maritime borders of Europe provides an effective analysis of the integrated network of policies used to control and monitor migration from outside the EU, while assessing the capacity of participating countries to translate policy goals into desired results. As with Ramos' analysis of US-Mexico security relations, they conclude that EU policies may impose a degree of collaboration on peripheral states, but often not sufficiently for those policies to achieve the desired results. Xavier Ferrer Gallardo's assessment of border policies in Spain's Ceuta-Melilla enclaves bordering Morocco frame the EU as an emerging "gated community"—seeking to limit access to migrants from neighbouring low-income regions in a top-down hardening of borders, while often turning a blind eye to the smuggling necessary to maintain the viability of border regions. Van der Velde and Marcinczak's chapter on the open-air bazaars of the Łódź region of central Poland provides a useful contrast to this analysis. It assesses the mutual accommodation of local communities and the Polish state to balance support for bazaars as an important component in the informal economies of post-Communist central Europe with the implementation of highly bureaucratized EU rules necessary for Poland's accession to the Schengen agreement on internal migration.

Borderlands provides a useful comparative overview of border policies and their effects on both economic activities and ordinary citizens in a wide variety of settings. It also notes the critical importance of domestic institutions and cross-border cooperation in empowering—or further marginalizing—the citizens of "peripheries" in dealing with both national governments and regional hegemonies. However, the volume's structure and the sequencing of its chapters could have been improved, whether in providing a more logical sequence of macro, sectoral, and micro-related chapters, or in grouping chapters on related topics to provide a clearer basis for comparison. Such difficulties may be understandable in an emerging field of study that cuts across several established academic disciplines. However, it reduces the coherence of Brunet-Jailly's otherwise excellent and nuanced analysis of the challenging interaction of borders, human interaction, and security policies.
