

BORDER REGIONS SERIES

The background of the cover is a photograph of the Peace Arch in Vancouver, British Columbia. The arch is a large, white, classical-style monument with the inscription 'BRETHREN DWELLING TOGETHER IN PEACE' on its pediment. Two flagpoles stand in front of the arch, flying the Canadian flag and the United States flag. The title 'BEYOND WALLS: RE-INVENTING THE CANADA-UNITED STATES BORDERLANDS' is overlaid in large, bold, black capital letters. The authors' names 'VICTOR KONRAD' and 'HEATHER N. NICOL' are at the bottom in smaller black capital letters.

# BEYOND WALLS: RE-INVENTING THE CANADA- UNITED STATES BORDERLANDS

VICTOR KONRAD  
HEATHER N. NICOL

# BEYOND WALLS

# Border Regions Series

Series Editor: Doris Wastl-Walter, University of Bern, Switzerland

In recent years, borders have taken on an immense significance. Throughout the world they have shifted, been constructed and dismantled, and become physical barriers between socio-political ideologies. They may separate societies with very different cultures, histories, national identities or economic power, or divide people of the same ethnic or cultural identity.

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# Beyond Walls

Re-inventing the Canada-United States Borderlands

VICTOR KONRAD  
*Carleton University, Canada*

HEATHER N. NICOL  
*Trent University, Canada*

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*For Aili, Joel, and Laurianne*

*For Rupert, James, Jessica, Daphne, William, Cedric and Hillery*

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# Preface

Almost two years ago we decided to write a comprehensive book about the border between Canada and the United States of America. The border was gaining attention and becoming apparent to many more Americans and most Canadians. The decisions of governments in both countries brought about new measures to combat terrorism, regulate trade, anticipate emergencies and control border crossing. Initially, these measures produced a noticeable change in how the border worked, and ultimately they may have a fundamental impact on how Canadians and Americans interact with each other. These were compelling reasons to explore what was happening at the Canada-U.S. border.

Yet, there were more specific reasons and some very large issues that intrigued us, and the growing number of scholars, policymakers and observers who have acknowledged and examined the changes at the border. We have not addressed all of these questions in our book but we have tried to be both comprehensive and detailed in our approach to the major issues before us at the border. In late 2007, as we complete our writing, border security remains a major concern for Americans, but measures to control the movement of people across the boundary are slow in evolving. New identity requirements for Americans as well as foreign citizens, including Canadians, have drawn new lines and emphasized others between peoples in North America and around the world, at the same time that globalization trends have erased other lines between us. North American companies have urged governments to align trade and security imperatives and create a new order of cross-border trade corridors. But the sustained viability of the North American “prosperity partnership” remains uncertain fully six years after the events of 9/11. The re-bordering of America has had a massive price-tag but its potential impacts on the lives of Americans, and certainly Canadians, remains to be examined and more fully understood. These human dimensions, the impacts of re-bordering on the people in Canada and in the United States, and particularly those who live in the borderlands, is a major concern of this book. What is the new security border doing to the borderlands culture which has evolved over centuries between the United States and Canada?

In the 1960s Canadians recognized that they enjoyed a special relationship with Americans, and that this relationship was articulated at the border between them. Canadian writer and editor Bruce Hutchinson expressed this sentiment well in his book *The Long Border*, published in 1966:

The border between the United States and Canada...is the most friendly and least visible line of international power in the world. It is crossed daily by thousands of travelers who hardly notice it in their passage. It is washed by a Niagara of congenial oratory and illuminated, or sometimes obscured, by a perpetual diplomatic dialogue. On both sides

the border is taken as a fact of nature, almost an act of God, which no man thinks of changing.

The border has changed, most prominently in recent years of the 21st century. The boundary itself is more visible. Security has become an imperative. American power and hegemony appear to be cascading up to and over the boundary. Daily cross-border movements of people now number in the hundreds of thousands. The diplomatic dialogue continues, but Canadians acknowledge that, more and more, Americans are setting the agenda on security, immigration and border dynamics. The border no longer appears to be a fact of nature but a construct of a strong willed and single minded U.S. administration. Is God on their side?

Both of us grew up near the boundary, and in our lives we have grown to appreciate the meaning of the border, in part as geographers who study its impact, and as citizens and residents of both countries. We have watched the border open and experienced it close. We have seen it change in form and function, and in the perception of people who live close to it and far away. For both of us the border between the United States and Canada is an essentially and deliciously human construct which conveys all of the features of intense and prolonged cultural, social, political, and of course economic contact. The border between Americans and Canadians, and the borderlands which bring us together, need to be understood and celebrated. As we all have learned often and painfully elsewhere, a wall is not a solution, but only an inevitably surmountable and temporary barrier between people.

Victor Konrad, Ottawa and Heather N. Nicol, Peterborough  
October, 2007

# Acknowledgements

The idea for this book emerged about two years ago when we were approached by Valerie Rose of Ashgate Publishing shortly after our presentation at the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers in Chicago. She asked if we would write a book on the changing border between Canada and the United States. We had been considering the idea of tackling a comprehensive volume on the border so we welcomed the suggestion and the contract from Ashgate. Since then, everyone at Ashgate, and particularly Valerie Rose, Amy Rowbottom, Carolyn Court, Donna Elliott, Dymphna Evans, and Nikki Dines have been exceptionally helpful, patient and tolerant. Sarah Horsley, Alison Oughton and especially Pam Bertram did an excellent job of carrying the book project to completion.

Attention to the Canada-U.S. border is a relatively recent phenomenon, and a few pioneers worked diligently during the post-World War II era until the 1980s to construct the basics of our understanding of the “longest undefended border in the world”. We are indebted to Norman Nicholson in Canada, and Julian Minghi in the United States, who examined the intricacies of the border as their colleagues and contemporaries in the social sciences looked over and beyond the border at the Canada-U.S. relationship. With talk of free trade in the 1980s, the border came into focus again after years of benign neglect. It was then that several groups of border research enthusiasts emerged in universities close to the border in both countries to explore the borderlands of the United States and Canada. Robert Monahan and Donald Alper (Western Washington University), Douglas Jackson (University of Washington), Alan Artibise (then University of British Columbia) and Len Evenden (Simon Fraser University), among many others, inspired border research in the Pacific Northwest. Roger Gibbins (University of Calgary) led efforts in western interior Canada. James McConnell (SUNY, Buffalo) began a research focus on Canada-U.S. trade in the heartland and other borderland researchers emerged at universities throughout the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence regions, on both sides of the border. On the Atlantic Coast, the University of Maine led the borderlands inquiry, engaging participants from institutions, governments and associations throughout the international region of the Northeast and across the United States and Canada. The Borderlands Project, as it was called, was initiated with financial support from the William H. Donner Foundation, with major funding contributed by the Government of Canada and provincial governments. It began with the efforts of Lauren McKinsey at Montana State University. We were all inspired by Lauren at the time, and border studies lost one of its leaders when he suffered a stroke. The Borderlands Project, with Alan Artibise (then University of British Columbia), Victor Konrad (then University of Maine), Peter Kresl (Bucknell University), Robert Lecker (McGill University) and Lauren McKinsey, all at the helm, began to establish



the basis for borderlands work by sponsoring and publishing research across the social sciences and humanities. This body of work helps to inform our approach, and the recent work of borderlands scholars across the continent.

Yet, time and events have re-shaped perspectives on the border between Canada and the United States. It was in the 1990s that the border research gained momentum, and after the events of 9/11 that the border became an object of public scrutiny. Our aim in this book is to convey the major directions and findings of the substantial efforts both completed and underway to understand the evolving border relationship between Canada and the United States. The current scholarship is extensive and we have acknowledged the contributors throughout the book in every chapter.

Inevitably, some people have become more engaged than others in this book project, and for this contribution we are thankful. In this regard we would like to acknowledge Jason Ackleson, Donald Alper, Robert Huebert, Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, Oscar Martinez, Julian Minghi, Doug Nord, Claudia Sadowski-Smith and Randy Widdis for reading and commenting on formative papers and chapters. Colleagues in government and the policy community have been exceptionally supportive and helpful, particularly Al Arseneault at the International Boundary Commission, Andre Downs and Gary Sawchuk at the Policy Research Initiative of the Government of Canada, Michael Hawes at the Canada-U.S. Fulbright Commission, and Daniel Abele and Angela Aranas along with their colleagues at the Canadian Embassy in Washington D.C.. We owe a particular debt of gratitude to government officials in both countries who have been very forthcoming with insights and suggestions, but given current sensitivities on many border security issues, have declined attribution. Many other colleagues have assisted in innumerable ways: Michael Brklacich, John Clarke, and Simon Dalby at Carleton have provided generous support and suggestions.

Technical assistance was provided by John Congleton, (University of West Georgia) and Stephen Gardiner (Trent University) and Rupert and James Dobbin. William Schaniel from University of West Georgia provided much needed moral and logistical support.

Our families have provided much more than moral and logistical support to complete this project. Joel Konrad devoted a great deal of his precious time as a doctoral student to discussing borderlands with his dad, reading manuscripts and exploring concepts. Aili Kurtis was never too busy with her art to share in musings and ideas about borders.

Now that the book is done we look forward to spending more time with them.

Victor Konrad, Ottawa and Heather N. Nicol, Peterborough  
December 12, 2007

## Chapter 1

# The Canada-United States Borderlands in the 21st Century

*WASHINGTON—The United States is eager to install a battery of surveillance towers, motion sensors and infrared cameras to monitor the Canada-U.S. border.*

*Now if we can only find it.*

*After years of neglect and under funding by Washington and Ottawa, the International Boundary Commission admits it can no longer identify large swaths of the Canada-U.S. border, particularly in heavily forested areas overrun by dense shrubbery and sprouting trees. Last month, the Department of Homeland Security announced the first \$67 million contract for its Secure Border Initiative, a surveillance plan expected to carry an overall price tag of about \$2 billion.*

*By comparison, the International Boundary Commission receives just \$1.27 million US from Washington to carry out its mandate. CanWest News<sup>1</sup>*

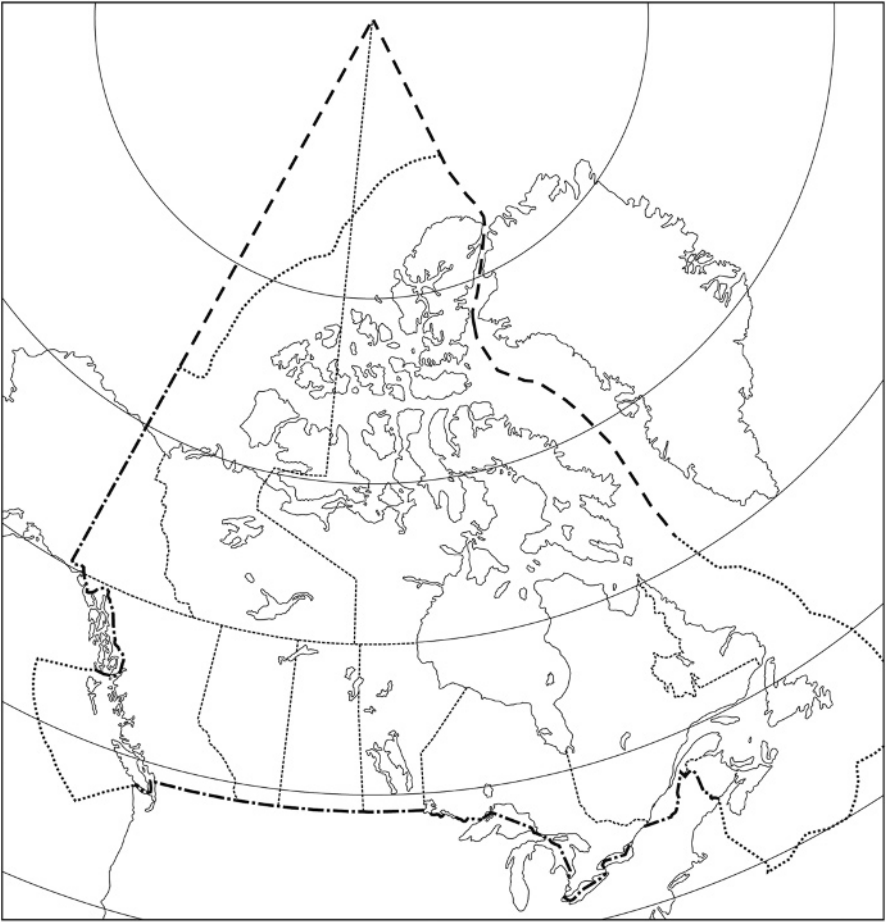
*HOULTON, Maine—The Boeing Co. has been awarded a three-year contract to implement the first part of what could be a multi-billion dollar plan to reduce illegal entry along the 12,000 kilometres of border with Canada and Mexico using better technology, including cameras, sensors and even unmanned airplanes. Associated Press<sup>2</sup>*

Canada and the United States of America share one of the longest, and, until recently, one of the most benign borders in the world. Since the events of September 11, 2001, this boundary has become a focus of anxiety for both governments, a target of extreme enforcement by authorities, and a flashpoint for growing public concern on both sides of the border. Yet, for more than a century this boundary was almost invisible as both the United States and Canada aligned their aspirations and goals along an acknowledged boundary between them. Each country had emerged along a different track. The United States grew vigorously and tumultuously from a revolution which defined its nature and destiny. Canada evolved more gradually from a measured and orchestrated beginning. Yet, at the border, differences were set aside once the boundary was finally established. The United States and Canada, it seemed,

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1 Sheldon Alberts, "Canada-U.S. border seems to be missing," Washington, CanWest News Service, October 7, 2006. <http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=17c5f36-b517-4aea-bf22-770> Accessed March 29, 2007.

2 "Canada-U.S. border obscure in places: commission," Associated Press, November 1, 2006. <http://www.unitednorthamerica.org/viewtopic.php?t=3179> Accessed March 29, 2007.



**Map 1.1      The Canada-U.S. Border and Canada's Northern Boundaries**

*Credit:* Stephen Gardiner, Trent University.

had invented the ideal border relationship where people, ideas, goods—almost everything, moved freely and relatively quickly and easily across the boundary.

The border worked, and indeed it appeared to function very well as long as both countries exercised constraint, demonstrated trust, showed mutual respect, and operated together to achieve the primary common goal of prosperity. As the 20th century came to a close, economic integration had advanced to new heights under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the border had become a fulcrum of trade facilitation. Trucks moved millions and then billions of dollars worth of goods across the border, while the only major causes for anxiety revolved around the capacity and condition of roads and facilitating infrastructure, and issues surrounding deregulation and shipping. Cross-border regions of mutual interest defined a borderland of interaction where the two countries met. Cascadia along the

Pacific rim, the Great Lakes heartland, the northeastern borderlands, and numerous regional and local corridors in-between comprised a working space where the two countries joined more than separated. A variety of programs and plans were in place to expedite border crossing for frequent travelers, and an even greater number of efforts were aimed at streamlining trade. This trade had become worth more than a billion dollars a day.

The nature of this border, with its focus upon trade and the movement of goods represents more than a brief moment in the late 20th century when free trade prevailed and borders adjusted accordingly. As we will illustrate in this book, the nature of this border and its contemporary role have been in the making for years. Nineteenth century border management policies were developed to regulate cross-border flows of goods long before the NAFTA came into effect, setting the tone for the “material” orientation of border policies in the 21st century. Even after the NAFTA was negotiated, significant changes were made to transportation policies to facilitate the new trans-border flow of goods which followed. In this sense the border has never been independent of a free trade arrangement, and free trade would have been impossible without the borderlands.

Yet, on a now infamous day in September 2001, what had already become by then a massive border crossing machinery ground to a virtual halt as the United States and Canada, and the world, reeled from the impact of the terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, DC. On that day the border between Canada and the United States became very visible indeed as thousands of trucks waited in long lines on both sides of the border for permission to proceed, and as hundreds of thousands of people waited in cars, on busses and trains, and in airports for the “lockdown” to be lifted. Many turned back late in the day from what had begun as a routine border crossing early that morning. On that day in September the border relationship was scrutinized by all Americans and Canadians, by many for the first time, as they proceeded to reinvent the boundary and the border zone between them.

In this book we look both forward and back from the events of September 11, 2001, (9/11) in order to place the reinvention of the Canada-United States borderlands into context. We examine the nature and meaning of the boundary between the countries, and view the border construct of the United States and Canada in comparison to the boundaries between other countries. Are we unique in our border relationship, and if so why? How did the boundary emerge? What are its defining characteristics? What makes it work? These are among the questions that guide our exploration of a border relationship which is integral to the everyday lives of most Canadians and a substantial number of Americans.

## **A Vision for the Border**

Let the 5,000 mile border between Canada and the United States stand as a symbol for the future. Let it forever be not a point of division but a meeting place between great and true friends.<sup>3</sup>

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3 This statement is attributed to Ronald Reagan in 1978 before he became President of the United States. The sentiment has been echoed by U.S. Presidents throughout the 20th century.

The rhetoric embracing the cooperative nature of the border relationship between the United States and Canada prevailed throughout the 20th century. Have we lost sight of this vision? Does this sentiment continue to define the Canada-United States border? We believe that this vision of the border broadly conceived, and indeed a romantic image of the Canada-U.S. border more narrowly conceived, continues to prevail in the post-9/11 era of security enhancement, divergent national imperatives in the United States and Canada, and apparent turbulence in trade. To this end, every one of these potential barriers to effective interaction across the border is in fact reshaped and mitigated at the border, or more specifically in the borderlands interaction zone through the ameliorating quality of the border, or even more specifically, through the cultural processes which shape border arrangements.<sup>4</sup>

Early in 2006, Mexicans demonstrated against the new fence under construction along the length of the United States border with Mexico.<sup>5</sup> No chain link fence is proposed along the northern frontier of “fortress America”, however.<sup>6</sup> Yet the time-worn political rhetoric about the “longest undefended border in the world”<sup>7</sup> has disappeared both in Canada and the United States. In its place a new, “post-9/11” border culture has emerged in the Canada-U.S. borderlands. This border culture is not based upon the “continental divide” identified by Seymour Martin Lipset in his study of the values and institutions of the United States and Canada,<sup>8</sup> although Lipset, in an earlier version of his text, refers to the confluence and distinction of American and Canadian values and culture.<sup>9</sup> Instead, we now are seeing the formation of a new border culture which “does work” in the sense that it must increasingly build the context of cooperation or the cultural bridges required to keep the NAFTA and the binational context of Canada and the United States functioning. Canadians and Americans may have shared and not so shared values, but the border is now a place where values are not the main concerns which warrant definition by political boundaries.

This invariably and inevitably raises the question as to what is meant by border culture specifically, and culture as a process more generally. In the 1970s, Clifford Geertz suggested that culture could be defined as “a historically transmitted pattern

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See James J. Blanchard, *United States Presidential Addresses to the Canadian Parliament, 1943-1995*, Ottawa: Embassy of the United States of America, 1995.

4 Border culture is seen as a force that accommodates and mitigates the opposing forces of cross-border movement and border security, particularly when these opposing forces become stronger.

5 “Walls and fences - on America’s southern border”, editorial in *The Economist*, January 14, 2006, 18.

6 The term “fortress America” has seen increased use in print since the events of 9/11. The term is not new, yet it is not clear who initiated its broad usage in the press.

7 This popular phrase has been a 20th century standard in political rhetoric in the USA and in Canada. See National Film Board of Canada, *Between Friends/Entre Amis* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976, published in Canada to commemorate the U.S. bicentennial.

8 Seymour Martin Lipset, *Continental Divide, The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada*. Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, 1989.

9 Seymour Martin Lipset, *North American Cultures: Values and Institutions in Canada and the United States*. Borderlands Monograph Series 3, University of Maine Press, 1989.

of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions,”<sup>10</sup> whose meaning could be found in “an array of cultural texts.”<sup>11</sup> Such a definition suggests that culture is not an object, as much as a construction to be understood in the details of “thick descriptions,” or as Michel Foucault suggests, in the “social frameworks that enable and limit ways of thinking and acting.”<sup>12</sup> Indeed, writing from a materialist approach, Don Mitchell builds upon these concepts but focuses more directly on the relationship between complex political and economic processes which contextualize culture in the post-industrial era.<sup>13</sup> Mitchell suggests that culture is “an effect of struggles over power,” and that it is expressed “as a reification of meaning, certain ways of life, or patterns of social relations: it is a materially based idea or ideology about social difference.”<sup>14</sup> He goes on to note that culture may be different from economic relations, but it cannot be understood as “severed from them.”<sup>15</sup> For Mitchell, culture is thus a verb signifying the struggle to establish cultural value on the basis of broader economic and political values.

At the same time, he asserts that the place or spatial context in which struggle for a definition of meaning and value takes place matters significantly. “A cultural geography that is really meaningful will have to return to the fact that the world we live in” matters to the process of accumulation of capital, which is at the heart of a materialist perspective on culture.<sup>16</sup> While we would not care to confine our understanding of culture as applied in this volume to a materialist perspective, such insights are useful in understanding the link between the physical context of the border, the changing economic and political purpose that it serves, and the overall cultural processes which are embedded in borderlands themselves. From this perspective culture is heavily implicated in politics, and it is tied intimately to power. Place is resistant or facilitative of the penetration of economic and political processes, while cultural landscapes themselves reflect and facilitate the economic and political processes at work. It is in this sense that post-structural concepts of culture, particularly from a materialist perspective, are useful, although not totalizing the theories we engage for our understanding of border processes. It means that “border culture”, is the way we live in, write about, talk about and construct policies about the border, and the way in which we have constructed actual cultural landscapes of binational regulation and exchange. As such, this border culture continues to enshrine our shared imperative for economic gain, and seeks to guard time-honored

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10 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays of Clifford Geertz*. New York: Basic Books, 1973, 89.

11 Garth A. Myers, Patrick McGreevy, George O. Carney and Judith Kenny, “Cultural Geography,” in Gary L. Gale and Cort J. Willmott, eds., *Geography in America at the Dawn of the 21st Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, 85.

12 Ibid.

13 Don Mitchell, *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.

14 Don Mitchell, “Historical Materialism and Marxism,” in James S. Duncan, Nuala C. Johnson, and Richard H. Schein, eds., *A Companion to Cultural Geography*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004, 62.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid., 63.

linkages, but it imposes an enhanced screen of security across the borderlands of traditional exchange and human engagement where goods are constantly expedited while people wait. And yet “border culture” is not a “thing”, a reified manifestation or concept to which one and all subscribe. It is instead, a dynamically evolving framework for encoding the meaning of border and for evaluating the efficacy of borders as new security and economic concerns unfold.<sup>17</sup> It reflects, resists and also enables the now somewhat contradictory post-9/11 values of secure border and economically open border under the NAFTA, and makes sure that these issues retain their centrality in early 21st century definitions of security, nationalism, patriotism, and power relationships.

A dynamic new border culture process also accommodates the politically sharpened alternatives toward security in the United States, and consensus about a need for emergency preparedness in Canada. Whereas the United States Government has heightened security dramatically since 9/11, and essentially moved from the position of trust in the U.S.-Canada boundary reaffirmed by every United States President in the 20th century,<sup>18</sup> Canada has aligned security elements on its side of the border to complement U.S. developments, but also defined its national security policy cautiously as a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan. In 2007, however, there are signs that the security imperative initiatives directed toward Canada by the Bush Administration finally are being challenged by the United States Congress. For example, Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont, perhaps emboldened by the new, slim Democratic Party majority in both houses of Congress, berated the United States Justice Secretary for his Department’s handling of the Maher Harar affair. The Canadian Citizen was detained by authorities in New York and sent to Syria where he was tortured, instead of being returned to Canada. Among his scolding remarks, Leahy underscored that the Bush Administration had lost sight of the fact that the United States and Canada share the “longest undefended border in the world.” On the other hand, there are also signs that the security imperative still has substantial momentum. The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative to heighten security was passed after all by the U.S. Congress. At the end of January, 2007, all air travelers between Canada and the United States were required to carry valid passports or risk being denied entry. The aim of the legislation is to require passports or the equivalent approved identity card of everyone who crosses anywhere on the border sometime in 2008, although the deadline has recently been advanced from January to June. To many observers and experts the timing and the process are just unrealistic, yet it appears that the Bush administration plans to stand firm and enshrine this process as a legacy no matter what the cost. As such, the border between Canada and the United States seems to have changed more since the events of 9/11 than during the entire

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17 See for example: Katharyne Mitchell, “Cultural geographies of transnationality,” in Kay Anderson et al, eds., *Handbook of Cultural Geography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003, 74-87.

18 Jason Dittmer, “Captain America’s Empire: Reflections on Identity, Popular Culture, and Post-9/11 Geopolitics,” *Annals, Association of American Geographers* 95, 3, 2005, 626; see also: James J. Blanchard, *United States Presidential Addresses to the Canadian Parliament, 1943-1995*. Ottawa: Embassy of the United States of America, 1995.



20th century. Our view is that the border, and the cultural processes at work within the borderlands, at regional to continental levels of resolution, have both evolved, but that the change is aligned with the sustained, core values of both nations, and the border protocols based on these values.

In this book we explore the development of a new border culture where economic exchange and integration are valued highly, and are advanced primarily by effective movement and limited by security. Yet the formula is not so simple. The border culture—malleable, dynamic, responsive, inclusive—is a force of considerable power, and it mitigates constantly to enable interaction while maintaining sovereignty. In a recent study we considered the impact of the events of 9/11 on the Canada-U.S. border relationship, and concluded that the new security imperative hastened streamlining the border crossing of goods initiated by NAFTA over the previous decade, and developed a more defined hierarchy of border crossings, with larger, goods-oriented crossings accorded priority status along the new “smart” border of technologically-advanced screening of goods and people.<sup>19</sup> These developments, we now realize, would not have been possible without a border culture able to encompass rapid and massive change without conflict and the breakdown of interaction.

This book examines the “border culture” that enables the long-standing “security and prosperity partnership” enjoyed by the United States and Canada. We try to understand the cultural, political, geographical and economic dynamics that make it possible for our two countries not only to coexist, but also to prosper constantly. The book aims to evaluate the main developments surrounding the reinvention of the border: transnational regionalism and cross-border community building, juggling security and trade imperatives, NAFTA and other constructs to move the goods, people and passports at the world’s longest undefended border, diverging approaches to emergency preparedness, environmental concerns at the border, and the emerging Arctic borderlands. We explore the changing nature of the new rules of engagement and interaction in the borderlands zone where Canada’s geography meets the geography of the United States. Foremost, the book is about a human and cultural construct, a border like none other in the world, where Canadians and their powerful American neighbors have fashioned and maintained a benign boundary between two similar yet very distinct countries.

## **Redefining the Border?**

We have so far found two quite different ideas of border. The first defines Canada [or the United States] in terms of differences, in terms of what lies on its other side, or of what it does not, or will not admit: this conception of the border is expressed as both a dividing line and a sanctuary line. The second version of the border is as a place identified with the

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19 Victor Konrad and Heather N. Nicol, “Boundaries and Corridors: Rethinking the Canada-United States Borderlands in the Post-9/11 Era,” *Canadian-American Public Policy* Number 60, December, 2004.



middle ground, with the union of opposites, and with mediation. The first of these ideas of border is of the borderline; the second is of the borderland.<sup>20</sup>

Before we deal explicitly with how the border functions both as a fence and a bridge, let us review the facts about the Canada-U.S. border, and how it has changed at the beginning of the 21st century. Today, and every day, more than \$4 billion worth of goods and services crosses the Canada-U.S. border, making it the largest trade relationship in the world.<sup>21</sup> And it is still growing. About 70% of this trade moves by truck, and much of that through the Windsor-Detroit “gateway” which facilitates the highest cross-border trade volume in the world. Along the Canada-U.S. border, approximately two hundred million border crossings take place every year.<sup>22</sup> Every day 300,000 people move across the boundary between the two countries. Here, then, is an enormous trading relationship with a substantial movement of people across the boundary. This helps us to understand, when, in 2001, the stark reality of American vulnerability initiated a response that would evolve a border crossing strategy to expedite goods and scrutinize people. A clear gateway exists along the Canada-U.S. border, in terms of goods and people; it is a routinized pattern of crossing which is arguably of even greater benefit to Canadians than Americans. After 9/11, a first response by the United States to “lock down” the border was followed immediately by measures to ensure the economically critical resumption, and in fact enhancement, of trade flows between Canada and the United States. Then, Canadians and Americans turned their attention to the dilemma of how to increase security and minimize inconvenience and waiting time for people crossing the border. The continued expansion of two-way trade since that time, emphasizes the significance and perhaps even the success of the “goods first programs”.<sup>23</sup>

Was the border redefined at this moment? Our contention is that the border vision and definition prevailed for they are grounded in the border culture, and that the change occurred after 9/11 in operation and management, and in image building. These changes were by no means superficial for they have caused massive adjustment and have cost billions of dollars, but the changes were overdue to expedite NAFTA and an evolving and aligned bordering process. Almost overnight the U.S.-Canada border was required to operate as a “secure” boundary to guard against the infiltration of terrorists and their weapons.<sup>24</sup> Coincidentally, the border needed to remain open to the world’s largest trade flow.<sup>25</sup> We have shown elsewhere that the United States

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20 Russell Brown, *Borderlines and Borderlands in English Canada: The Written Line*, Borderlands Monograph Series 4, University of Maine Press, 1990, 44.

21 Government of Canada, “United States-Canada. The World’s Largest Trading Relationship,” April 2004. *Friends, Neighbors and Business Partners*. [http://www.dfaitmaeci.gc.ca/Washington/trade\\_and\\_investment/wltr-en.asp](http://www.dfaitmaeci.gc.ca/Washington/trade_and_investment/wltr-en.asp). Accessed December 12, 2006.

22 [http://www.cric.ca/en\\_html/guide/border/border.html](http://www.cric.ca/en_html/guide/border/border.html). Accessed January 22, 2007.

23 Konrad and Nicol, op. cit.

24 Dwight N. Mason, *Canada Alert: Trade Security in North America - The Importance of Big Ideas*, Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2004.

25 Canadian Council of Chief Executives, *New Frontiers: Building a 21st Century Canada-United States Partnership in North America*. Ottawa: CCCE, April, 2004. [www.ceocouncil.ca/publications](http://www.ceocouncil.ca/publications) Accessed January 22, 2007.

and Canada solved this problem by expanding upon and expediting many existing post-NAFTA measures, as well as incorporating new ones designed to enhance the flow of goods, standardize procedures, upgrade security technology, and, generally, streamline trade and border crossings, particularly at major regional portals where the flow of goods was greatest.<sup>26</sup> The border was the same; it simply needed to be operated more effectively and more efficiently.

Our image of the border, both in Canada, and in the United States, however, required some work to create alignment with national political positions and international outlooks which appeared to be diverging rather than converging with regard to the purpose and effectiveness of the boundary. Stuart Farson suggests that there are critical agreements which need to occur if the border relationship is to continue to be effective. This involves agreement on crucial elements, and agreement on those elements which are not crucial and over which both countries will disagree.<sup>27</sup> The image building to facilitate a sustainable border vision evolved a new border culture, and this new border culture needed to encompass a United States imperative for homeland security, on the one hand, and a Canadian desire to, first and foremost, keep the goods flowing, and secondly help to establish a more secure border and prepare for emergencies. Related to these imperatives, Farson suggests that there are, in fact, four specific initiatives which will be required to maintain the relationship: prevention of illegal infiltration of goods and peoples through Canada's "back door" into the U.S.; shared critical infrastructure that is protected and resilient; information sharing between intelligence communities in Canada and the U.S.; and, prevention of the spread of infectious diseases across the border.<sup>28</sup> These are decidedly American imperatives and to build consensus on all four initiatives would require adjustments to current public as well as political dialogues and perceptions. At this time there is no collaborative vision among Canadians and Americans, but rather sharply different opinions as to what to do about a common problem.

To some extent these divergent opinions prevail. For example, during the years after 9/11, the Governments of Canada and the United States have been successful in building independent, and seemingly divergent, approaches to emergency preparedness in Canada and homeland security in the United States, yet engaging these different approaches at a border that appears, in form and function, to look very much the same. The balance of this initial chapter seeks to introduce how a new border culture of accommodation enabled greater diversity of national imperatives, traditional local and regional connections, streamlined procedures for expediting trade, and a virtual security screen, all to coexist and flourish. All of these themes are expanded in the subsequent chapters of the book.

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26 Konrad and Nicol, op. cit.

27 Stuart Farson, "Rethinking the North American Frontier After 9/11," *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 21, 1, 2006, 37.

28 Ibid.

## Divergent Approaches: Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness

In October 1999, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien and U.S. President Bill Clinton confirmed guiding principles for Canada-U.S. border cooperation and their implementation through the Canada-United States Partnership (CUSP).<sup>29</sup> The principles therein proposed to streamline and harmonize border policies and management, expand cooperation to increase efficiencies in customs, immigration, law enforcement and environmental protection at and beyond the border, and, collaborate on common threats from outside the United States and Canada. CUSP was “intended to serve as a forum to promote an integrated, binational approach to border management, and foster public dialogue and research on the border of the future.” In less than a year, the accord was to experience a severe test-9/11, but the accord retains its integrity and effectiveness despite the fact that Canada and the United States have moved in different directions to deal with security at the border, and that a fundamental element of trust by the United States in Canada has been lost in the process. That the accord pre-dated the events of 9/11, may have been crucial in this respect, at least in terms of its role in building some degree of confidence and cooperation prior to the test of good will. The United States has since embraced a centrist and isolationist notion of homeland security while Canada has developed an outward-looking, and more extensive approach to emergency preparedness. The divergence was apparent immediately after 9/11 as Canadians worked to keep the border open to the unimpeded flow of low-risk goods and people, whereas the Americans pointed to enforcement challenges and the levels of high risk at the border.

Since 9/11, the Department of Homeland Security, previously a collection of many smaller government divisions, has emerged as a large and powerful agency of the United States Government displaying a decidedly defensive posture and a predominantly anti-terrorist agenda.<sup>30</sup> While some might suggest that this is as much a “rhetorical” as real border agenda, so overwhelming was this stance in orienting domestic security thinking that the agency was criticized for not recognizing threats from other quarters, primarily the devastating hurricanes Katrina and Julia.<sup>31</sup>

Emergency preparedness, although a well-defined component of Homeland Security, was relegated to less visible stewards at the federal level, and often demonstrated more effectively at the state and regional levels. For example, Vermont Emergency Management<sup>32</sup> and the Pacific Northwest Preparedness Society (PNWPS)<sup>33</sup> gained momentum in the post 9/11 period, and drew on state and

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29 Foreign Affairs Canada, *Creating Tomorrow's Border Together - The Canada-United States Partnership (CUSP)* <http://geo.international.gc.ca/world/site/includes/point.asp?lang=en&print=1&url=%2Fca>. Accessed January 23, 2007.

30 For details of the Department of Homeland Security genesis and legislation see <http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic>. Accessed January 22, 2007.

31 The press coverage of the criticism of DHS handling of Katrina and Julia response is substantial and continues to this day. See Scott Shane and David D. Kirkpatrick, “Unaware as Levees Fell, Officials Expressed Relief”, *New York Times*, March 2, 2006.

32 <http://www.dps.state.vt.us/vem/index.htm>. Accessed January 22, 2007.

33 <http://www.epconference.ca/resources.html>. Accessed January 22, 2007.

regional mechanisms, common interests and shared experience in facing emergency situations. The 9/11 events brought about a national outpouring of grief and calls for action to defend America. It is important to recognize that the most visible and visceral federal response, the Department of Homeland Security, identified the predominant threat to America as a terrorist threat coming from outside the country, and established priorities that relegated preparedness for domestic emergencies and natural hazards to a lower level.

The response to Katrina, which was perhaps not widely recognized in the United States, and certainly not acknowledged officially, showed that America was indeed vulnerable despite a massive build-up to protect itself against anticipated incursions. It showed that the concept of “fortress America” is flawed, and that American isolationism does not work in a world where actions and reactions now have global impacts. America was in fact somewhat startled, and perhaps embarrassed, after Katrina, when countries worldwide sent aid, and Canada sent teams of utility workers and other specialists across the border to assist with recovery.

In Canada, by contrast, emergency preparedness has developed cautiously as the unifying, central concept in legislation to respond to the need for a “comprehensive, all-hazards approach to emergency management.” Although initially emergency preparedness was designated a “low profile” portfolio within the government, this changed after September 11, 2001, with the new momentum towards border security. The Office of Critical Infrastructure and Emergency Preparedness, previously housed within the Department of National Defense, was shifted at that time, and amalgamated into a central emergency preparedness agency.<sup>34</sup> This took place in a number of steps, each of which reflected the evolution of a different perspective on security within Canada when compared to its American neighbor. The National Security Policy, tabled in Parliament on April 27, 2004, addressed three core national security interests: protecting Canada and Canadians at home and abroad, ensuring that Canada is not a base for threats to allies, and contributing to international security.<sup>35</sup> Highlights of this policy included investment in Canada’s intelligence collection and assessment capacity including cyber security, greater marine security, a next-generation smart borders agenda, establishment of an Integrated Threat Assessment Centre, and creation of a new Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Emergency Response teams.

On November 17, 2005, the Honorable Anne McLellan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, introduced the Emergency Management Act in the House of Commons. The Act was carefully developed to provide a solid legislative foundation for emergency management in the 21st century.<sup>36</sup> Although McLellan’s policy emerged slowly, both federal and provincial agencies had adopted new measures and guidelines for emergency preparedness before the legislation was introduced in the House of Commons. Transport Canada,

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<sup>34</sup> Farson, op. cit., 37.

<sup>35</sup> *Securing An Open Society: Canada’s National Security Policy*, see [www.pco-bcp.gc.ca](http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca). Accessed January 22, 2007.

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.psepc.gc.ca/media/nr/2005/nr20051117-en.asp>. Accessed January 23, 2007.

for example, moved quickly to advance and adopt new procedures.<sup>37</sup> A Canadian Centre for Emergency preparedness (CCEP) disseminated disaster management principles and practices, provided education and training, helped with career development, and offered research.<sup>38</sup> May 7-13, 2006 was designated by the federal government as Emergency Preparedness Week.<sup>39</sup> The election of Stephen Harper and the Conservatives has not changed this policy direction significantly.<sup>40</sup> The point remains that Canada has followed a different path in the design and implementation of emergency preparedness.

These differences are interesting from the perspective of the different public perceptions and political cultures that sustain them, and perhaps point to differences in the degree to which each country grapples with definitions of individual and comprehensive security. It could be said that it is collectively these differences and the common will to overcome them, which constitutes the underlying reality of the Canada-U.S. borderlands in the 21st century. These differences are indeed evident in other areas of policy making which are not so sensitive or scrutinized publicly. It may be that because the differences are quite profound, and so politically important, emergency preparedness and homeland security policies meet at the border, and appear to merge seamlessly. In actual fact, the engagement is managed in a new interaction space, where diverging policies are accommodated because the stakes are too high for conflict or a breakdown of communications. These are the spaces that Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly calls "zones of inclusion".<sup>41</sup> In this interaction space, we find as well the massive and rapid movement and exchange of goods and services. Just-in-time business processes like auto manufacture in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Ontario and Quebec could not compete without this transfer system. Rapid transfer is accompanied by deeper and faster scrutiny over a wider area, or in the "interlinked economies" of zones of inclusion.<sup>42</sup> There are tradeoffs and compromises in the new border culture. Beef and softwood lumber are stopped for a time as regional and sectoral interests revive old cross-border differences in the new interaction space. These and other differences are being resolved because the new border culture is primarily about managing the border faster and better.

## Managing the Border

The new border culture is replete with examples of cross-border institutionalization at various levels and scales. Agreements and accords predominate where informal

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37 <http://www.tc.gc.ca/emergencies/menu.htm>. Accessed January 23, 2007.

38 <http://www.ccep.ca>. Accessed January 23, 2007.

39 [http://www.emergencypreparednessweek.ca/plan\\_e.shtml](http://www.emergencypreparednessweek.ca/plan_e.shtml) Accessed January 22, 2007.

40 Stephen Frank and Stephen Handelman, "The Meaning of Harper," *TIME* February 6, 2006, 20-27; see also "The Northwest Blockage - Maybe we don't own, or control, the Arctic waters after all," *Maclean's*, February 27, 2006, 16-17.

41 Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, "Security and Border Security Policies: Perimeter or Smart Border? A Comparison of European Union and Canadian-American Border Security Regimes," *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 21, 1, 2006, 5.

42 *Ibid.*

arrangements once prevailed to make the border relationship work in the communities of the borderlands, hence the earlier suggestion that it is becoming an “intermestic” border, a border where intermesticity replaces trust. Some of the new agreements have their roots in NAFTA and CUSP, but more have emerged after 9/11 to define and report risk, outline cooperation, delineate authority and align enforcement. For example, Integrated Border Enforcement Teams (IBETS)<sup>43</sup> now prevail, where a few years ago, fire brigades crossed the border informally to respond to emergencies, and law enforcement agents shared information when desired not required. At the same time, the Smart Border Accord, although it has not specified a prescribed series of actions, has facilitated a cooperative approach which is realized at some joint Canada-U.S. border posts in the western border region, where the process of scrutiny created highly integrated places of interaction and mutual surveillance. These are not reminiscent of the fire brigades, however, in the sense that the cooperation adds to, rather than diminishes, the process of scrutiny itself under conditions where there must be greater efficiency in terms of border resources and personnel deployed.

The new border regime is all about managing a border relationship where the risks have increased and the positions of the two countries have diverged. An underlying element in this new border regime is the encouragement of a facilitating set of values and practices, a “border culture” which sees the vigorous engagement of advanced technology to identify and reduce risk, and to enhance enforcement. The Smart Border, although in planning since the inception of NAFTA, was catapulted into reality by the events of 9/11. On December 12, 2001, then Foreign Minister John Manley and U.S. Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge signed the Canada-U.S. Smart Border Declaration.<sup>44</sup> A general framework initiated at the federal level in both countries, the Declaration underlines a “shared commitment to develop a border that securely facilitates the free flow of people and commerce, and that reflects the largest trading relationship in the world.” Canadians wanted sustained trade; Americans were concerned about risk. The solution to this divergence included cooperation to identify high risk goods but facilitate the flow of low risk goods, then creation of compatible commercial processes at the border to streamline trade in low risk goods, and development of secure procedures to clear goods away from the border, including at rail yards and ports.<sup>45</sup> This would help to expedite trade in a flatter, less concentrated and less congested portal system. Finally, it was imperative to identify security threats arriving from abroad by developing common standards for screening cargo before it arrives in North America. What is also remarkable about this agreement, like the Smart Border Declaration, it rests upon divergence and accommodation, and not a supranational institutional accord, defining a rigid set of criteria to which both countries must commit. The common thread in all of this was

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43 [http://www.rcmp.ca/security/ibets\\_e.htm](http://www.rcmp.ca/security/ibets_e.htm). Accessed January 22, 2007.

44 “Canada and the United States Sign Smart Border Declaration,” December 12, 2001. [www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/anti-terrorism/can-us-border-e.asp](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/anti-terrorism/can-us-border-e.asp). Accessed January 23, 2007.

45 Wendy Dobson, *Shaping the Future of the North American Economic Space: A Framework for Action*. Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, 2002.



the application of advanced and innovative technology.<sup>46</sup> The derivation and use of the new, standardized technologies also contributed to creating and sustaining the new border culture where virtual lines, connections and codes either allowed goods to pass or stopped them abruptly. In the next two years the Smart Border Action Plan encompassed customs, transportation, banking, and many aspects of commerce.<sup>47</sup> Several progress reports underlined commitment by both countries to the action plan for creating a secure and smart border.<sup>48</sup>

One policy decision that continues to cause anxiety on both sides of the border, but specifically in the borderlands, is the passport compliance plan or Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). The plan, to be in place by 2008, would require all Canadians and Americans crossing land borders into the United States to show a valid passport to be considered for entry.<sup>49</sup> The passport, after all, is “a key technology in regulating the flows of people between different countries.”<sup>50</sup> This may be “easier said than done” for both Americans and Canadians because only 30 percent of Americans and 50 percent of Canadians hold passports on the eve of this requirement, and the border crossing card recommended by the Governor of Washington also remains to be implemented.<sup>51</sup> Whatever the outcome of this discourse, it is evident that the mitigating forces of the border culture are at work, and making headway in an effort to curb the intransigent positions taken by the Departments of State and Homeland Security.

### **Why Borders Matter**

In 2004 Daniel Drache published *Borders Matter: Homeland Security and the Search for North America*.<sup>52</sup> The book is an engaging, rapid-response to the sudden realization of the border between Canada and the United States in the wake of 9/11. Drache explores Canada’s “dilemma” of responding to and dealing with the new “security-first” border it shares with the United States, and he offers a litany of insights and nuggets to draw the interest of a popular readership which has usually found the

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46 <http://www.canadianembassy.org/border/declaration-en.asp>. Accessed January 22, 2007.

47 “Progress Report on the Smart Border Declaration, June 28, 2002,” [www.cric.ca/en\\_html/guide/border.html](http://www.cric.ca/en_html/guide/border.html). Accessed January 23, 2007.

48 “John Manley and Tom Ridge Release Progress Report on Implementation of Smart Border Action Plan, October 3, 2003,” [www.cric.ca/en\\_html/guide/border.html](http://www.cric.ca/en_html/guide/border.html). Accessed January 22, 2007.

49 On April 5, 2005, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Department of State announced *The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative* to secure and expedite international travel. U.S. and Canadian citizens must have a passport or other secure, accepted document to enter or re-enter the United States by January 1, 2008. Most recently, the deadline was set back to June, 2008.

50 Donald McNeill, *New Europe, Imagined Spaces*. London: Routledge, 2004, 150.

51 “U.S., Canada seek way around border passport plan,” *USA Today*, Thursday, December 1, 2005, 1.

52 Daniel Drache, *Borders Matter: Homeland Security and the Search for North America*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2004.

topic of the border less than stimulating. His point, that borders do indeed matter, is expressed with an uncommon sensitivity toward social aspects of border crossing, cultural contexts of cross-border flows, the new geopolitics of the boundary, and the political economy of the Canada-U.S. relationship. Drache's purpose, to his credit, is not to be comprehensive but provocative, and to heighten the visibility of the re-discovered border so that both Americans and Canadians may learn more about their differences and similarities which meet at the re-defined border between them.

For us, and for our readers, Daniel Drache's work offers a convenient point of departure for exploring the re-invention of the Canada-United States borderlands now that we have had a few years to digest the impact of 9/11 and evaluate the postmodern institutionalization of the boundary. His themes emerge from the sudden and unsettling shock of 9/11, and the security-first border demanded by the United States. These themes question the viability of North American community and speak of a new political geography where "active localisms" emerge to sustain cross-border interaction. Some of the questions raised in *Borders Matter*, questions about the permeability of the border, the trajectory of the security imperative, the impact of security on the NAFTA economy, and the viability of North American community, are being clarified if not answered by the recent actions of governments, business, organizations and cross-border communities, themselves. We may now discern these patterns more clearly.

Our work is an attempt to look further and deeper, and, albeit, with the added hindsight and clarification afforded by the intervening years. We seek to understand the re-invention of the Canada-U.S. borderlands, and in order to achieve this goal our aim is to go back to the conceptual framework of borderlands research, to theorize, and propose an approach to evaluate the border, its operation, and its impact. In order to achieve this goal it is necessary, in our estimation, to touch the border itself. We need to understand initially how it was defined and demarcated. The border does matter. Also, the history of the border matters. And, the border culture matters. We would argue that only when we have established a clearer sense of these dimensions of the border, is it possible to move forward with a comprehensive analysis of the security imperative and its impact on the re-invention of the Canada-U.S. border relationship. The framework that we offer in this book allows us as to re-evaluate as well the goods and people divergence or streaming at the border, and other efforts to manage the border. We propose an approach to evaluating the new geographies of cross-border regionalism (and localism), security with trade, expedited goods, regulated human movement, re-visioned environment, and anticipated Arctic boundaries.

### **From Outposts to Portals: Reinventing the Borderlands**

The nature of the borderland zone has changed. This change, however, is subtle and barely visible in the borderlands landscape. Canada and the United States continue to share a border without armies patrolling each country's perimeter. On the U.S. side, approximately 2000 agents scrutinize incoming goods and people. On the Canadian side, the major emphasis is on goods brought into the country by



Canadians, and 1,300 Canada Customs and Revenue inspectors and 350 Citizenship and Immigration agents do the job. The RCMP are on call, and together with the Canadian and U.S. Coast Guards, they patrol the boundary waters and the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and often the project requires joint patrol and cooperative responses.<sup>53</sup> This is a very small force to monitor and secure a 5,000 mile boundary. However, the border is becoming more secure with a “state of the art” virtual wall in place to halt cross-border traffic where it is not allowed, and to identify unlawful or threatening entry at crossing points. The virtual wall with portals is not readily apparent, so the borderlands appear to be unchanged, and to function unchanged, and Canada and the United States appear to be conducting business as usual. Indeed, the appearance of a benign, smooth and orderly border crossing process and space, is an integral part of the “prosperity partnership”<sup>54</sup> image.

The borderlands are prosperity space for Canada and the United States. In order to sustain this prosperity space, both countries have invested heavily to enhance the movement of goods and services, and to maintain a secure border. This process has expanded exponentially after the events of 9/11. A border “technoscape”<sup>55</sup> has emerged rapidly, almost instantaneously in the context of Canada-U.S. relations, in response to the sudden globalization of risk and the conditions of globalization itself. Heightened mobility, greater interaction, a growing economic impetus for interaction, higher levels of mobility, are all in operation here. The portals in this technospace, now far-removed from the border outposts of the past, are, indeed, emerging as new order linkages in a new conceptualization of spatiality and theorization of movement.<sup>56</sup> These “windows” are not to be seen through in the traditional sense, but they are windows to cybernetic pathways which must be followed to get to the desired result and the desired place. The portals are virtual channels to the other side. They expedite passage, and they must now be taken. There are no alternatives. In this sense, by venturing into the technospace, we have taken a step forward or beyond, but it is also a step of no return.

The portals lead Americans and Canadians beyond traditional oppositions across the border, away from the concept of border as boundary. The new technospace enables Canadians and Americans to exceed the boundaries that once defined the limit of their geographies. Also, this interaction space exceeds the determination of the two nations, it seeks a new form of identification for Americans and Canadians who traverse its portals. Are we seeing the deterritorialization of the borderlands, where borders have now become virtual borderlands? This possibility requires more exploration, but certain is the fact that the cross-border discourse is becoming a postnational discourse.

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53 [http://www.cric.ca/en\\_html/guide/border/border.html](http://www.cric.ca/en_html/guide/border/border.html). Accessed January 23, 2007.

54 In March 2005, President Bush hosted a meeting with Prime Minister Martin and Mexican President Fox to announce a new North American Security and Prosperity Partnership. This was an appealing image carefully constructed to be interpreted differently in each of the three countries.

55 Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

56 “Historical Memory, Global Movements and Violence: Paul Gilroy and Arjun Appadurai in Conversation,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 16 (2), 2004, 21-40.

The portals may be the conduits of this postnational discourse but they have retained a local and regional character throughout the process of reinvention of the borderlands. Translocal culture remains the constant in the transition from outposts to portals.<sup>57</sup> Translocal culture—family ties, cooperative arrangements, and community linkages across the border—existed in the border outposts, and it remains an integral component of the new border culture, the element of continuity, the link to the past and the future.

The appearance of the Canada-U.S. borderlands remains consistent with the border landscape fashioned during the 20th century of peace and prosperity between our two countries. This landscape often shows less difference across the border than it exhibits from region to region across the continent.<sup>58</sup> The ambient context for cross-border exchange is both a cause and an effect of the Canada-U.S. border relationship, for the image of what is right, and what works is rooted deeply in a border culture. This culture is dynamic, and constantly evolving, nurtured by successful exchange, and honed by the barrage of challenges that it encounters.

### **Evolving Borderlands**

The border relationship between Canada and the United States continues to evolve as the two countries grapple with some of the thorniest issues ever to threaten the relationship. Among these is the very real problem of how to place passports in the hands of millions of American and Canadian nationals who do not hold the travel documents, have never owned passports, may not be able to afford to purchase them, yet feel that they have a traditional right to cross the border. Passport offices and agencies are posting wait times for passport application processing which have doubled and tripled. Americans flock annually to cottages, fishing camps, coastal homes and year-round recreation and vacation destinations in Canada. Canadian “snowbirds” own or rent countless properties in Florida, the lower Atlantic coast, Texas, New Mexico and Arizona, and of course California. Millions of brief cross-border visits occur annually for shopping, business, and pleasure. Canada’s provincial premiers, at a meeting in February, 2007, delivered a strong message to the federal governments that this new passport requirement will prove devastating to tourism and cross-border business. If the Bush Administration stays the course with the passport requirement, how will this re-shape the border relationship and the borderlands?

Canada and the United States remain at an impasse on the environment. After the Harper government was elected in Canada, it appeared that there would be an alignment of conservative interests across the border, but Canadians have asserted their voices of concern and made the environment the primary political issue in the country. This pressure for accountability has forced the Conservatives to

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57 For an example see the vivid illustration of Osoyoos, British Columbia and adjacent Oroville, Washington in Roger Gibbins, *Canada as a Borderlands Society*, Borderlands Monograph Series 2, University of Maine Press, 1989, 6-10.

58 Lauren McKinsey and Victor Konrad, *Borderlands Reflections, The United States and Canada*. Borderlands Monograph Series 1, University of Maine Press, 1989.

soften their stand, and raised the possibility that the differences in environmental policies may continue between the United States and Canada. This raises the specter of sustained disagreement and confrontation at the boundary, and a direct impact on the environment of the borderlands. What will happen if differences in policy orientations continue to stand in the way of local and regional cross-border environmental concerns such as Great Lakes water quality or wildlife control in the Rockies? Beyond the Kyoto Accord, where do Canada and the United States find common ground on greenhouse gas emissions? What will the impact be for both countries, and particularly the borderlands, if the United States and Canada continue to diverge in their perspectives and their policies on global warming?

The Harper government, in a surprise move for the American administration, and many Canadians, has made strong assertions about Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic, and particularly the water routes which traverse the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. Canada now sends icebreakers regularly through the area, and has increased the military presence in the Arctic. Many Canadians are looking north again, toward Arctic lands and waters which have not seen this amount of media attention since the establishment of Nunavut almost a decade ago. Diamond mines and ever more petroleum exploration are drawing attention as well. Is Canada sending out a new message about Arctic sovereignty? What are the stakes in this new borderland zone? How do indigenous interests and concerns fit into the emerging policy position? Can Canada sustain a strong sovereignty position in the Arctic without U.S. alignment?

Most cross-border regions and communities, unlike the Arctic, are a part of everyday life between the United States and Canada. We are now familiar with Cascadia—the cross-border Northwest—and with the Detroit-Windsor corridor, if only because these borderland constructs are in the news regularly. There are many more regional and local cross-border relationships that are not well known, but, nevertheless, function very effectively to facilitate a variety of needs and desires including medical services, emergency support, tourism facilitation and, of course, trade. How did these cross-border regions and communities develop? What sustains them? What happens to them when national policies change? What will new regulations and enforcement mean to “business as usual” along the Canada-U.S. border?

This brings us, inevitably, to the issue of trade. Canada and the United States remain the largest trading partners in the world, at least until China emerges as the major trading partner for the United States. Canada trades all over the U.S., not only in the borderland states, and not only in autos and auto parts. The United States trades with every part of Canada, and draws heavily on both Canada’s natural resources and its manufacturing output. The Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement and NAFTA have facilitated and highlighted this massive trade relationship, and changed the North American marketplace in many ways. What have the trade agreements done to the borderlands between the United States and Canada? How has border-crossing changed for goods and services? How have Canada and the U.S. reconfigured the border zone to cope with the growing demands to move goods and services between the countries?

Security has been the major concern, certainly after 9/11. The need to address security concerns posed by worldwide terrorist attacks mobilized both the United

States and Canada to establish new procedures, more effective enforcement, greater standardization, and enhanced attention to risks. The United States has emphasized “homeland security” whereas Canada has described its advances as “emergency preparedness”. How do these approaches work between the United States and Canada? How do they mesh at the border?

Indeed, a prevailing concern is the question of whether the Canada-U.S. relationship can weather the recent differences that inevitably find substance and expression at the border? Canadians and Americans are sanguine that the relationship will persevere. It always has. The primary question that concerns us in this book is how has the border relationship helped the United States and Canada adjust to the new global realities and maintain a working border? We seek the answer in the borderlands culture that prevails between the countries yet is malleable and adjusts to facilitate the relationship. This borderlands culture is pervasive but elusive. Understanding it requires unlayering the border relationship and examining closely how the border works in intricate detail, today and in the past. Understanding the Canada-U.S. border is to understand how borders and borderlands work in general, and this knowledge is only recently evolving in the work of researchers and writers in a broader North American context and around the world. This big picture, the global level of analysis, combined with an understanding of the changing geopolitical dialogue in the post-modern era, help to position our exploration of the new Canada-United States borderlands. The re-invention of the Canada-U.S. borderlands, we suggest, will also help us to understand borders and borderlands more effectively elsewhere.

Our intention in this book is to establish first what it is that we know about borders and other edge concepts, and what we need to know to embark on this exploration. The second chapter emphasizes concepts, previous discoveries, new ideas about borders, and theorizing. Then we look back in the following chapter, back to how the border between the United States and Canada developed, and, more importantly, what this evolution of the border lends to our understanding of how the borderlands work. The following chapter examines border regions and communities in order to understand the components of the lengthy and diverse borderlands. Trade and security imperatives have led in the re-invention of the borderlands. These forces are assessed in chapters five, six and seven. The movement of goods is evaluated in chapter five, the imposing emergence of the security border and emergency preparedness are the major concerns of chapter six, and the impact of security on people and passports is evaluated in chapter seven. Environmental concern and the borderlands is the subject of chapter eight. Chapter nine turns to the northern border, the Arctic, for a current analysis of how the northern frontiers of Canada and the United States, and other Arctic nations meet. The final substantive chapter serves as an opportunity to collect all of the analysis of the previous chapters and examine it in the context of our emerging understanding of borderlands culture.

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