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James Peach

Income Distribution along the United States Border with Mexico: 1970–1990

This article examines income inequality along the U.S. side of the U.S.-Mexican border region in the context of national trends toward greater income inequality. The focus is on two questions. First, is there a greater or lesser degree of inequality in the border counties than in the border states or the nation? Second, what changes in income distribution have occurred in the border region in recent decades? Data from three U.S. Censuses are used together with various measures of distribution to address these questions. Among the conclusions reached are: (1) income inequality in the border counties is generally greater than in either the border states or the nation; (2) there was some improvement in border county income inequality in the 1970s while the reverse was the case in the 1980s and (3) the results are not particularly sensitive to the choice of statistical measure of distribution.

John Sargent

Maquiladoras and Skill Development

This paper examines the contribution of different segments of the maquiladora industry to the development of industrial skills in Mexico. Using data collected through interviews at 30 maquiladoras and with 59 line and technical workers, the relationship among process technology, Japanese manufacturing techniques, and human resource practices is explored. The results suggest that large maquiladoras that utilize technologically-intensive process technology and that do some manufacturing do not have significantly more attractive human resource programs than large assembly maquiladoras that use relatively simple process technology. The primary conclusion from this study is that the growth of skills development activity in the maquiladoras is best explained by the rapid growth of the transportation equipment industry over the last 15 years and not to growth of technologically-intensive forms of production.

Carol Zabin

Nongovernmental Organizations in Mexico's Northern Border

This article documents and analyzes the activities of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) along the western part of Mexico's northern border. The research is based on fieldwork with 26 Mexican civic, not-for-profit organizations that promote social change and community development in the areas of environmental protection, poverty alleviation, and human, indigenous, and women's rights in Tijuana, Mexicali, Agua Prieta, Nogales, and Ciudad Juarez. Border NGOs are classified with respect to their activities and working style, focusing particularly on their relationship to their grassroots constituencies. The strongest NGOs are environmental groups, which in general work in policy-oriented research and lobbying, and economic development NGOs, which mostly promote small

business development. NGOs promoting a variety of civil rights generally operate with few resources and relatively little competency to carry out long-term capacity building among their constituencies. The article shows that in contrast to NGOs in Mexico's interior, which have developed as allies of poor people's social movements, NGOs along the northern border do not have strong links with grassroots organizations of the urban or rural poor, thus limiting their effectiveness in promoting democratization and poverty alleviation. The author explores the factors contributing to the unique characteristics of border NGOs, including border culture and politics, ties to U.S. NGOs, and the recent creation of many border NGOs.

Lilias C. Jones, Pamela Duncan, and Stephen P. Mumme

Assessing Transboundary Environmental Impacts on the U.S.-Mexican and U.S.-Canadian Borders

The implementation of environmental impact studies (EIS) in border areas has received scant scholarly attention despite potential transboundary implications and initiatives to promote greater international cooperation in conducting environmental impact assessments. This study reviews and compares two recent U.S. environmental impact studies with transboundary implications, the All-American Canal lining case on the U.S.-Mexican border and the Columbia River Basin Systems Operating Review case on the U.S.-Canadian border. This comparison finds significant variation in EIS implementation between the two cases that may be accounted for on the basis of extant institutional-structural, procedural, and ecological factors in play in each border region. Drawing on the case study evidence, the study offers several recommendations for strengthening the transboundary environmental impact assessment process.

James Wesley Scott and Kimberly Collins

Inducing Transboundary Regionalism in Asymmetric Situations: The Case of the German-Polish Border

The German-Polish border region, located along the European Union's eastern boundary, is characterized by sharp disparities in living standards and development. It also is a zone of contact between two very different political traditions and cultures that often have confronted each other in conflict. Since 1990, cooperation attempts on the German-Polish border have been actively encouraged by EU and German government agencies and supported through the creation of Euroregions, intergovernmental advisory boards, and other international bodies. Transboundary regionalism is seen as a means of promoting integrated development and socioeconomic cohesion within the context of European expansion and integration.

However, evaluations of German-Polish cooperation indicate that the creation of new institutions of cross-border planning is not enough; in order to be effective, German-Polish transboundary regionalism must not only prevail against policy discontinuities caused by administrative mismatches but also transcend traditional interagency rivalries within national contexts. Furthermore, it must engage both communities and senior governments on both sides of the border as partners in a regional development dialogue. This would require combining available resources at various levels, including a synergistic utilization of transboundary links of public and private agencies at various levels. Nevertheless, a vital question remains as to the proper mix of formal institutions and informal networks required in order to achieve this. Here, experiences from other international border regions, such as the U.S.-Mexican borderlands, could provide important comparative insights.

Pertti Joenniemi*The Barents Euro-Arctic Region: On the Restructuring of Northernmost Europe*

The Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) represents an endeavor to radically alter the frame of interpretation applied in northernmost Europe. While the images employed during the Cold War years were statist and security oriented, depending on clear-cut divisions, the new ones refer to local needs, connectedness, and civilian interaction. The effort has been one of portraying the area as part of an integrated and region-centered Europe. Space has been provided for increasing heterogeneity. In addition, this effort has—with some initial success—added to the centrality of the region by opening up for transborder cooperation. Different actors increasingly meet to discuss a broad set of issues. The arrangement is light, innovative, often spontaneous, and in line with the way political space is increasingly unfolding in the post-Cold War Europe. It has added—by the utilization and pooling of various local-specific strengths—to the weight of the region in European constellations. In addition, it has contributed to dramatic changes in the political and economic landscape prevailing in the North and is "beginning to show teeth," as some scholars describe its early years.

Joachim Blatter*Explaining Crossborder Cooperation: A Border-Focused and Border-External Approach*

The paper begins with an analytical model that was used for various studies within the framework of the research project "Preconditions for Successful Crossborder Cooperation on Environmental Issues" that was financed by the European Union and the Swiss government. The analytical model is based on a "rational" approach to public politics and is focused on the interests of the involved subregions and the institutions of cooperation within the crossborder regions. The use of the model enabled the research teams to explain a great deal of the environmental policy output and this approach was useful in developing recommendations for better practices.

Nevertheless, case studies showed much evidence that crossborder politics, and especially crossborder institution building, cannot be fully understood only by such a border-focused approach. Therefore, this paper expands previous efforts with a comprehensive description of influences from other political arenas beyond the crossborder arena. The hypothesis is that such interrelations between political arenas are major influencing factors for crossborder institution building, providing both incentives and restrictions for political activities and institutionalization. Several examples from border regions in Europe and North America illustrate this thesis.
