

Borderlands

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Authors' Contact Information

Spatial Equity and Transportation Hazard Along Cross-Border Trade Corridors: The Case of Ambos Nogales

Francisco Lara-Valencia
Arizona State University
e-mail: fcolara@asu.edu

Juan Declet-Barreto
Arizona State University

Eric Keys
University of Florida
e-mail: ekeys@ufl.edu

Economic Informality on the U.S.-Mexican Border: A (Re)View from South Texas

Michael Pisani
Central Michigan University
e-mail: pisan1mj@cmich.edu

Chad Richardson
UT-Pan American
e-mail: cr33d5@utpa.edu

J. Michael Patrick
New Mexico State Univ.
e-mail: jmpat@nmsu.edu

Heterogeneity, Borders and Thresholds: How Mobile Transnational Professionals Order the World

Magdalena Nowicka
Ludwig-Maximilian University, Munich, Germany
e-mail: magdalena.nowicka@soziologie.uni-muenchen.de

NAFTA and the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission: Assessing Activism in the Environmental Infrastructure Project Certification Process (1996-2004)

Jo Marie Rios
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
e-mail: jo.rios@tamucc.edu

Joseph Jozwiak
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
e-mail: joseph.jozwiak@tamucc.edu

Legacies of Anglo-French Colonial Borders: A West African and Southeast Asian Comparison

William F. S. Miles
Northeastern University
e-mail: b.miles@neu.edu

Spatial Equity and Transportation Hazard Along Cross-Border Trade Corridors: The Case of *Ambos Nogales*

Francisco Lara-Valencia, Juan Declet-Barreto and Eric Keys*

Abstract: *Using a spatial perspective, this article explores the equity dimension of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in Nogales, Sonora and Nogales, Arizona, two of the U.S.-Mexico border communities most impacted by trade after the implementation of the agreement in 1994. Ambos Nogales (Both Nogales) is a major hub within the cross-border transportation corridor connecting northwestern Mexico with the United States and Canada and both cities are subject to intense trade-related traffic, including the movement of hazardous materials and toxic waste generated by export-oriented industries in Mexico. As a first step in this analysis, we classify and map residential areas in Ambos Nogales applying an index of socio-environmental vulnerability. We then define the boundaries of existing hazard zones and their overlay with these areas in both cities. Finally, we contrast residential areas within the hazard zones with those outside to probe for patterns of social inequity both locally and across the border.*

*Lara-Valencia is Assistant Professor in the School of Planning at Arizona State University. Declet-Barreto is a graduate student in the School of Geographical Sciences at Arizona State University. Keys is Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Florida.

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Economic Informality on the U.S.-Mexican Border: A (Re)View from South Texas

Michael J. Pisani, Chad Richardson and J. Michael Patrick*

***Abstract:** In this paper, we review and extend previous work on U.S.-Mexico border economic informality with a special focus on the South Texas borderlands. Specifically, we offer three conceptual models of economic informality relevant to South Texas: 1) the informal marketplace at the border; 2) the confluence of (in)formality through the possession of different forms of personal documentation including the relationship between earnings and individual documentation; and 3) the graduation of informality to formality as informal firms mature (and grow) over time. Each of these models is supported with fieldwork, extended interviews, and case studies from the region. We conclude with a call for further research initiatives based upon the conceptual models proposed and offer methodological suggestions in the conduct of borderlands research on economic informality.*

*Pisani is Professor of International Business at Central Michigan University. Richardson is Professor of Sociology at University of Texas-Pan American. Patrick is Community Resource and Economic Development Specialist in the Cooperative Extension Service at New Mexico State University.

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Heterogeneity, Borders and Thresholds: How Mobile Transnational Professionals Order the World

Magdalena Nowicka*

***Abstract:** Do transnational mobile professionals live in a borderless world? How do they make sense of heterogeneity that they experience during their travel? These questions are central to this paper which investigates the 'invisible' boundaries in the world that is dominated by global networks of infrastructure and in which nation-state borders lose their relevance to individuals. On the basis of interviews with mobile professionals the paper discusses the condition of borderlessness that they claim to experience as well as their strategies of managing the difference and asks how they distinguish between 'here' and 'there' and 'us' and 'them.' The paper focuses on their mundane activities to show that their discontinuity marks boundaries between particular spaces.*

*Nowicka is a Research Assistant in the Institute of Sociology at Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich, Germany.

NAFTA and the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission: Assessing Activism in the Environmental Infrastructure Project Certification Process (1996-2004)

Jo Marie Rios and Joseph Jozwiak*

***Abstract:** The signing of the NAFTA agreement in 1994 brought environmental problems found on the United States/Mexico border into light. The new institutions created by NAFTA, specifically the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC), were designed to encourage public participation in the environmental infrastructure certification process. Using the insights of historical institutionalism combined with contributions from organizational decision making in the context of high probability technologies, we assess three key variables: environmental infrastructure types, attributes of the community, and institutional rules. To assess the impact of these variables on the BECC certification process, content analysis was conducted on infrastructure projects in Texas and the bordering Mexican states from 1995 to 2004. The paper finds that water and wastewater treatment projects prevailed on both sides of the border with Mexico receiving a greater funding level, largely because of the BECC's top down rule-making and its technical mission. A secondary finding is that transnational environmental groups have had little impact on BECC policies.*

*Rios is Associate Professor of Political Science and Public Administration at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. Jozwiak is Associate Professor of Political Science at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Legacies of Anglo-French Colonial Borders: A West African and Southeast Asian Comparison

William F. S. Miles*

***Abstract:** This paper applies the paradigm of colonial Anglo-French land partition of indigenous peoples to two discrete borderlands: the Upper Mekong in Southeast Asia, separating Burma/Myanmar from Laos; and Hausaland in West Africa, separating Nigeria from Niger. Effected at approximately the same time (late 19th century) by similar means (diplomatic convention) and with similar local impact (division of indigenous ethnic groups), long-term consequences of colonial partition sharply differentiate the two borderlands today: Africa bears a much stronger imprint of colonialism than does the Mekong. In certain respects, however, the two former French colonies of Laos and Niger resemble each other more than they do their geographical neighbors of former British Burma and Nigeria. Comparing geoculturally different borderlands provides perspectives that idiographic analyses may not.*

*Miles is Professor of Political Science in the Department of Political Science at Northeastern University and Adjunct Research Professor of International Relations at the Watson Institute at Brown University.

The author wishes to thank the Earhart Foundation for its support of travel to the Upper Mekong and its inclusion within his wider comparative study of the legacies of British and French colonialism. Previous travel to both the Golden Triangle and Hausaland had been sponsored by the American Philosophical Society. For opening my eyes to Chiang Mai and mainland Southeast Asia, I am extremely grateful to Dr. Kwanchewan Buandaeng and Witoon Buandaeng. The Fulbright program facilitated previous fieldwork in Nigeria and Niger. An earlier version of this article was presented at the Lineae Terrarum—International Borders Conference held at the University of Texas-El Paso and Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez (Mexico), March 27-30, 2006. Two anonymous referees of this journal made incisive and constructive criticisms, for which I am most grateful.

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