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Special Issue
'Rarely Studied Borderlands'

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Special Issue: 'Rarely Studied Borderlands'

Donald Alper and Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly,* Guest Editors

This is a special issue of *Journal of Borderland Studies* focused on the theme: "Rarely Studied Borderlands." The idea for this theme emerged during the organization of the last *Border Region in Transition* (BRIT IX) conference, held at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, and Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington, United States, in January 2008. The organizing committee, co-chaired by the editors of this special issue, Don Alper and Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, had intentionally widened the call for papers to include countries outside of Europe and North America; that is, to South America, Asia, and Africa. As a result, the over 150 participants of the BRIT hailed from 18 different countries. The wide range and diversity of the participants and research presented highlighted the importance of moving borderlands research away from its usual European and North American focus and expanding its theoretical and empirical contributions to include research on borderlands from across the world. This special issue takes up the challenge of pulling together research on these rarely studied borderlands: the Russian/Chinese border, the "Caprivi Strip" (Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe), the border region of North Santander (Colombia) and Táchira (Venezuela), the Euregion Karelia on the Finish/Russian border, the internal borders of the European Union, and the Indigenous peoples' "non-borders" in North America.

*Alper is Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for Canadian-American Studies and the Border Policy Research Institute at Western Washington University. Brunet-Jailly is Associate Professor in the School of Public Administration and Co-Director of the Local Government Institute, at the University of Victoria, Canada.

The Border Region of North Santander (Colombia)-Táchira (Venezuela): The Border Without Walls¹

Ana Marleny Bustamante*

***Abstract:** This article examines the actions of the border population, mainly on the Venezuelan side, acting as a pressure group(s), in response to the unilateral decision of the Colombian government to install tollbooths and levy tolls close to the international bridge linking these two countries. The political response is seen as a reality which contradicts geopolitical visions of conflicting national governmental interests and tendencies of governments to view borders as barriers which impede cooperation, and one which also reveals a functionalist assumption that borders allow and encourage trans-boundary flows. The study conducted was primarily hemerographic, accompanied by field work. This paper is divided into three parts: the first section presents a geographical and historic perspective of the border region of North Santander-Táchira to demonstrate that borderlanders have become providers of special conditions and commonalities, not found anywhere else along the Colombian and Venezuelan border. The second exposes the developments associated with the “toll conflict” as substantiation of the power of borderlands’ political action to frustrate national policies. The third part attempts to discuss the findings and provide explanations.*

*Bustamante is Teacher/Researcher in the Centro de Estudios de Fronteras e Integración (CEFI) at the Universidad de Los Andes-Táchira, Venezuela.

New Neighbourhood and Cross-Border Region-Building: Identity Politics of CBC on the Finnish-Russian Border

Ilkka Liikanen*

***Abstract:** This paper examines European cross-border region-building from the perspective of identity politics. How is cross-border regionalization conceptualized in the documents outlining EU policies of cross-border cooperation? How do these definitions meet, challenge and clash with the understandings of territoriality and identity on the regional level? The analysis is built on three case studies that examine the conceptualizations of supra-national, national, and regional territoriality in the case of Karelia, the historical region situated on the Finnish-Russian border. According to the results, the perceptions of local actors do not bear witness to the birth of a strong regional cross-border identity. In the Russian and Finnish border areas, more intensive cross-border co-operation can hardly be seen as proof of new European cross-border regionalism. As a conclusion, it is suggested, that instead of promoting above-given Europeaness, EU policies of CBC should be more open to the many European ways of combining regional, national and supranational perspectives, and avoid rhetoric equating cross-border regionalization and Europeanization.*

*Liikanen is a Professor and Director of the Karelian Institute at the University of Joensuu, Finland.

'Not Our Borders': Indigenous People and the Struggle to Maintain Shared Cultures and Polities in the Post-9/11 United States

Sara Singleton*

***Abstract:** Boundaries are drawn by the winners of territorial contests with little regard for the cultural integrity or internal social relations of those they displace. When national boundaries delineating Canada, the United States, and Mexico were established, they had the effect of bisecting several dozen tribes, leaving relatives on either side of borders, and cutting off access to areas where people from dozens of other tribes or bands had customarily gathered for trade, for socializing, and to participate in religious rites and ceremonies. Tribal governments have struggled with this problem for years. Post 9/11, borders have tightened and difficulties have multiplied. Now tribes are calling for a new deal, one which would allow them to modify Department of Homeland Security (DHS) requirements in order to ensure that tribal members will be able to continue to freely cross borders and to limit what tribes perceive as intrusive searches of regalia, sacred objects, and costumes used in ceremonies. In addition, many tribes are demanding a greater role in, and increased funding for, implementation of DHS policies on reservations. On the other hand, some would argue that the broader public interest in domestic security should override tribal concerns. In this paper I first examine the effects of border security measures on tribes/bands/first nations. Next, I incorporate recent debates on multiculturalism into an evaluation of arguments for and against developing a separate border protocol for indigenous people.*

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Thanks to the Border Policy Institute of Western Washington University for supporting this research. Thanks also to Don Alper for helpful suggestions on the article. Remaining errors are the responsibility of the author.

New Approach in Border Studies: The Need for Re-Thinking the European-African Borderland Through the Case of the EU-SADC Relationship and the Caprivi Strip

Chiara Brambilla*

Abstract: *This paper proposes re-thinking the relationship between EU(ropa) and Africa as an expression of the complex dynamics produced through the construction of what we define as the European-African borderland. We focus attention on the plural character of such a borderland, by assuming it not only as geographic territorial but also political, symbolic, cultural-anthropological, and epistemological. By taking this view, the paper attempts to contemplate the potential for a new epistemological perspective, speaking from the space of interaction along and across the shifting European-African borderland, assumed as a complex relational space. Far from being—as it is commonly represented—a territorial line separating two differences, the borderland becomes a “plurivocal” construction and its complexity can only be grasped through a new “pluri-versal” looking glass. This last observation points to the urgency to re-think the borderland as a space of interaction where the European-African relationship is articulated at a plurality of ‘levels’ (political, economical, cultural, etc). More precisely, our analysis deals with two issues that emerge as crucial in a number of narratives through which a Europe-Africa space of relation is defined: security and regionalization policies. The geopolitical centrality of these issues derives from their relations, as highlighted by a critical analysis of the so-called ‘EU-Africa Dialogue,’ launched through the Cairo-process in 2000. However, although security and regionalization are proposed in institutional narratives as cross-border strategies to construct a Europe-Africa dialogue, what seems to be missing from these initiatives is a clear self-criticism of the EU’s normative logic and model. We seek to develop this point by analyzing the EU-SADC (Southern African Development Community) relational geographies through reference to a territory of the Southern African region—the Caprivi Strip—a part of Namibia, but at the centre of old and new regional projects.*

*Brambilla is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre for Research on the Anthropology and Epistemology of Complexity, Department of Human Sciences, University of Bergamo, Italy.

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Border Dynamics in Eurasia: Sino-Soviet Border Disputes and the Aftermath

Akihiro Iwashita*

***Abstract:** The word 'Eurasia' conjures images of a grand chessboard where great powers compete. The region, however, has its own autonomous dynamic. Since the late 1990s, Sino-Russian relations have progressed and found a new stability and development, which results from a border dynamic that spreads to frontiers throughout the region.*

As a contemporary witness of the Eurasian border phenomenon, Dr. Akihiro Iwashita features why and how most Eurasian border areas suddenly shifted from international conflict to cooperation. He also explains the reasons behind the Sino-Central Asian disputes, and suggests mechanisms for resolving territorial disputes.

*Iwashita is a Professor and Director of the Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, Japan.

Re-Negotiating Europe's Identity: The European Neighbourhood Policy as a Form of Differentiation

Pertti Joenniemi*

***Abstract:** The contribution sets out to probe changes in the essence of the European Union through the lens of neighborhood. It rests on the claim that the advent of the concept of 'neighbor' in the context of the Union's new policy of neighborhood (ENP) testifies to an altered EU-identity. It argues that approaching the concept as foundational rather than seeing it merely as something functional and instrumental reveals crucial changes not just in the EU's vicinity but first and foremost in the EU itself.*

*Joenniemi is Senior Research Fellow at the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), Copenhagen, Denmark.

Security Governance in the Largest Border-Metropolis of the Schengen Area: The Lille ‘Eurodistrict’ Case Study

Bertrand Wert*

Abstract: *This paper describes and explains where the Schengen area stands in terms of controlling and securing the border-metropolis of Lille, from its inception in 1993 with the Single Market and its well-known consequences on the internal European border security. It will present the traditional security actors and systems, i.e. polices, border and custom patrollers, and the action of the new Common Cooperation Centre of Polices and Customs based in Tournai (BE). Secondly, the action of some new public and private operators and systems, i.e. the “Eurodistrict” organization, the bi-national security commission, and internal cross-border public transport securitization, are introduced. We focus on stakeholders’ participation in the implementation of cross-border security governance. This analysis leads to conclusions on the necessary reorganization of the security regime and its consequences on traditional political and administrative frames.*

*Wert has received a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Paris-Dauphine, is an occasional Lecturer at the University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and is a Research Fellow at the *Centre Interdisciplinaire de Recherche (CIR)*, Paris, France.

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