Session 35. Border Theory, Security, and the Changing Borderlines and Borderlands of North America /
Sécurité et théorie des frontières en Amérique du Nord (1 - Border Theory And Security In North American Context)

Emmanuel BRUNET-JAILLY, University of Victoria: In an era of security, is the territoriality of borders challenged?

What is security in the International Relations literature? There are two broad schools of thought: The 'narrow' debate about security studies focuses on the enduring primacy of military security (Buzan, Waever, deWilde, 1998) (Gray, 1994). 'Political Actors' are central, and 'States' are at the core of all discussions. Security is the study of the threat, use and control of military forces' (Walt, 1991). Another 'wider' debate about security, however, points to the non-military sources of threats, and argues that threat is often non-military, but conceptualizes security in term of, for instance, the economy (Buzan, 1991, Luciani 1989), or the environment (Deudney, 1990). All in all, the post cold war period focused security studies on military and nuclear issues. Security was, then, about 'anything that concerns the prevention of superpower nuclear war' (Buzan, 1998). But once the Berlin-Wall fell the entire strategic community had to rethink its analyses. It was not about the East-West confrontation anymore but globalization.

Those new understandings of what security is also affect our understanding of what borders are because security affects states and the primary markers of states: borders. Unsurprisingly, our understanding of borders, in this new era of security is also changing. Today's borders 'vacillate' (Balibar, 2002). Borders are not at the border itself. Indeed, 'Limites' remain. They mark the end of a 'sovereignty,' and the beginning of another sovereignty. But, borders are no longer always clear territorial demarcations. They no longer embody the superimposition of sets of state functions, of sovereignty, administration, cultural control, taxation – they do not work for people and things in the same way anymore, nor do they filter people "equally." Borders are multiple – their territoriality challenged.

Tony PAYAN, University of Texas at El Paso/Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juarez: Toward a Function-Based Theory of Borders.

This paper argues that borderlines and borderlands are becoming spaces where functions are both increasing in number and poorly clarified. It posits additionally that borders are increasingly assigned more and more functions and must do with much the same infrastructure as before. This combination makes for more complicated borders, where quality of life of borderlanders prosperity opportunities are lost, and borders are further dehumanized. Borderlanders, that is, pay a high price for this. To deal with this, policy makers must find the way to classify, define, and decentralize border functions. This can be accomplished in part by devolving power to local authorities and moving border functions away from the borderline in order to recreate the border as spaces of orderly and efficient flows rather than as spaces of blockage and obstruction.

Donald ALPER, Western Washington University: Border Security in the Borderlands: The Importance of Local and Regional Governance as the Foundation of Effective Border Management.

The literature on border security is in agreement that highly centralized border security arrangements are not facilitative of effective border governance (see Zartman 2009; Sands 2009; Kieck nd; Gavrilis 2008). This literature points to the importance of dynamic regional processes with emphasis on the role of regional and local actors in the securitization process. We contend that border securitization, although conceived in terms of broad security missions of national governments, is carried out within a borderland context where mobility of persons and goods that cross borders are strongly interlinked with practices, techniques and rules of control and surveillance (Gruszczak 2010:5). The interlinking of security practices with cross border flows is important in legitimizing policies through local acceptance, mediating policies by local public and private actors seeking functional solutions to border problems, and translating policies to fit local circumstances. Our approach for examining the role of regional and local actors in the securitization process focuses on 1) attitudes of borderlanders toward security; 2) cross border institutions; and 3) scale and perspective in border policy thinking. The paper, drawing on evidence from the Cascadia cross border region located in the Canada-US Pacific west, shows how border security enhancement is shaped and sensitized by local and regional governance mechanisms, practices and scalar perspectives.