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CANADA-US BORDER SECURITIZATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR BINATIONAL COOPERATION

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ABSTRACT

State borders are critical junctions where oppositional dynamics of exclusion and inclusion are played out. In the last eight years, transnational congruence inherent in economic globalization has clashed directly with the assertion of territorial security by the United States. Borders, harkening to the geopolitics of past centuries, are once again asserted to be sites of vulnerability and lines for maintaining control over people and territory. Border enforcement emphasizes controlling movement of undesirable people and goods, but it is also about ensuring domestic stability and countering challenges to the status quo. Given a history in which immigrants are as likely seen to be threats to national security as welcomed sources of assets and skills, border concerns and border control processes invariably breed anxiety about internal social and cultural boundaries as well. By differentiating the "other," borders and their supporting narratives

reinforce them. In addition to immigrants and refugees, people considered sufficiently different from prevailing norms are also affected.

While national border policies affect the nation as a whole, border regions are disproportionately impacted. Border regions are the locus of cross border social and economic relations, the first point of contact and interaction between nations. As such, they serve to mediate perceptions of, as well as actual, relationships between countries. Their functions as social and economic conduits are constrained as border controls are intensified. Borders, under these conditions, serve to weaken relationships, and impede cross-border cooperation in such areas as commerce, environment, and public health. But the costs of border restrictions are far more than material and environmental alone. They involve social and psychological costs of growing suspicions, reluctance to engage, or slowed momentum for investing further in well established transboundary networks for working in common to solve complex problems.

Focusing particularly on the Canada-U.S. border, this paper examines the impact of tighter border policies and enforcement processes on cross-border interaction, as well as their implications

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for binational and multinational security challenges. Among the questions that will guide the discussion are: What impact do exclusionary border policies have on host societies? How do border policies impact conceptions of borderlands and binational cooperation? What problems are inherent in the often heralded trend toward smarter borders?

INTRODUCTION: BORDER INTERACTIONS AND INTERDICTIONS

Borders simultaneously separate and unite, repel and compel. The inconsonant divisive and integrative pairings and oppositions inherent in borders imply a continuum of cross-border interaction, such as that proposed by Martinez (1994) as spanning 1) alienation (with hostility and closure); 2) coexistence (with limited binational interchange); 3) interdependence (with general stability and friendly cooperation); and 4) integration (with strong stability, merged economies, and unrestricted movement). As the twentieth century ended, ever greater economic integration had come to characterize the Canadian-U.S. border, while interdependence deepened in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands despite persisting asymmetries.

The sharp shift in both rhetoric and practice since 2001 makes the optimistic discourse about deepening economic and intercultural integration seem distant in time. The control function of borders has been firmly asserted in the wake of the events of September 11. The comprehensive security-oriented policies embodied in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, characterized by surveillance, exclusion, and retrenchment, increasingly appear as a panoptic system, one that takes everything into single view and in which the reach of power is totalizing (Payan 2006). Heralded as an era of "smart borders," growing socio-technological sophistication is seen as necessary to filter "good flows" from "bad flows." Clearance requirements, biometrics, profiling, and more overt and even coercive searches are coupled with the enlistment of a broad array of agencies, community groups and media partners in enforcing new and more control-oriented border management technologies.

"Smart," panoptic borders do more than simply regulate and control people and territory. They also impede well established transboundary networks and inhibit the emergence of new relationships. Intended as mechanisms of control and monitoring, such borders entail trade, environmental, social and psychological costs.

These costs include higher expense for goods and services, negative impacts on cross border travel, slowed momentum for working in common, division of cross-border communities, and growing suspicions and reluctance to engage. Greater border restrictions only exacerbate these costs and generally weaken borderland societies within North American border regions.

This paper will explore the impact of increased border securitization and supporting narratives, with emphasis on border regions. As the locus of cross border social and economic relations, border regions are the first point of contact and interaction between nations. They are also the sites of exclusion, where those outside are as likely to be seen as a threat to security as they are welcomed as neighbors for their skills and potentials. Border regions are also the best place to trace out the implications of intensified state security policies. We conclude by suggesting that border security be re-conceptualized as a process that needs to build on the longstanding social and economic interactions that define border regions, and to actively draw the international players into border activities, rather than alienating them as potential threats to an increasingly gated nation state. We question the trend toward "smarter borders" as the technocratic solution to balancing facilitation with control.

THE CANADA-U.S. BORDER: SUDDEN INSECURITY

For U.S. politicians and the public alike, border concerns have until recently been almost exclusively about Mexico. The U.S.-Mexico border has drawn enormous attention in the media, in literature, and in politics—indeed it has long been the only border in North America meriting much consideration. By contrast, the U.S.-Canada border has figured prominently in the psyche of Canadians, while in the U.S. few people give it much thought. The vastly different histories and physical and cultural differences in the two borders (Loucky and Alper 2008) add particular complexity to any attempt by the United States to devise a consistent and comprehensive border approach.

In contrast to the climate today, the U.S.-Mexican border historically has not been seen as overly problematic, except during economic downturns. The isolation, harsh environment, and regional distinctiveness of *la frontera* resulted in longstanding social interactions across the border, with residents adapting modes of exchange and means of communication to facilitate mutual advantage across

differences of culture, language, and socio-economic levels. Most of the time, Mexican workers were welcomed when needed, while providing a convenient scapegoat when domestic woes worsened. "Mexican scares" occurred periodically, beginning with a fanning of nationalism and nativism through claims of manifest destiny in mid-nineteenth century Texas (Nevins 2002). More recently, a significant number of unauthorized immigrants, whose presence the media and many anti-immigrant groups spotlight, and an upsurge of drug/gang violence in the near-border regions of northern Mexico, have led many in the United States to increasingly worry about immigration and drug violence as both a "Mexican" and a "porous border" problem.

In light of America's unfortunate history deprecating those different and darker, the sudden emergence of external danger in 2001 made almost inevitable the conflation of further potential threats with unwanted border crossings in the south. Former Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge reinforced this linkage by stating that "undocumented aliens are as dangerous to the United States as terrorists, drug dealers or weapons of mass destruction" (Chanona 2006, 130). Dual U.S. concerns about terrorism and immigration figured prominently in the North American Agreement on Security and Prosperity, promulgated to integrate security operations of the three countries comprising the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), along with enactment of the Merida Initiative that allows U.S. advisors to operate within Mexico.

Rhetoric and related policy have continued to be ramped-up since. By 2009, drug violence and corruption were added to uncontrolled immigration and entry of dangerous enemies as security threats that could spill across the border from Mexico (The Joint Operating Environment 2008). Before turning responsibilities over to President Barack Obama, the outgoing George W. Bush Administration designated Mexico as the United States' southern security perimeter through the creation of a North Command. There was even a suggestion of the need of an Iraq-like "surge" in operations on the border to contend with what some government officials and media observers were beginning to call a "failed state." All the while, an expensive border security apparatus (that may at best encompass less than half the 4000-mile border) nonetheless proceeds to rise as a symbolic though largely ineffective testament to questionable premises and practice.

To the north, by contrast, issues in Canada –U.S. relations historically have only infrequently involved the border. For at least a century, bilateral relations have been about policy conflicts involving fish stocks, softwood lumber, mail order pharmaceuticals, acid rain, "lenient" drug policies, and differences in foreign policy (like relations with Cuba and the war in Iraq). Except in connection with boundary disputes in the 19th century—involving mostly the United Kingdom—security issues have not involved the border per se, but instead have been encased in broader geopolitical categories such as continental missile defense and NATO. Because Canada in modern times has not been an object of national security, nor has it ever been a source of racially different and significantly poorer immigrants, American public policy generally paid little attention to the border or for that matter to Canada as a whole.

After 9/11, however, this lack of interest shifted and American views of Canada and the border took on a very different shape. Many people in the media and some public officials claimed that the 9/11 terrorists came from Canada, when in fact none did. Even after that fear was proven unfounded, commentators and political leaders, including Obama's Secretary of Homeland Security (U.S. Security Czar 2009), have continued to decry the border as unsafe, implying that Canada is a potential staging ground, with immigrant communities providing havens for terrorists. In 2008, *Maclean's* Magazine, in the article "Blame Canada" (Geddes 2008, 24), decried the fear mongering about the border, although seven years had passed since the 9/11 attack. The story reports on an updated border security doctrine being taught in 2008 at the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College which includes a required textbook that draws this comparison between Canada and Mexico: "The threat along the northern border, while far less publicized, is nevertheless cause for concern—perhaps equal concern, perhaps greater" (Ibid.).

What is important is that these images of border danger, long associated with Mexico and recently being asserted about Canada, have become part of a national narrative about security in North America. It conforms to what Ackleson (2000) calls a "script of international relations" that attaches meanings to borders associated with dominant post-9/11 images of threat stemming from dangerous transnational forces, a part of a larger narrative about how the nation's national security is dependent on protection from outsiders.

Borders form a centerpiece in this narrative because they separate "inside" from "outside" and are represented both literally and figuratively as the last (or first) line of defense of territory and country.

But borders are also abstractions. They require imagination, in the same way that people have an imagined community when speaking of their "nation" (Anderson 1991). Just as nations are never wholly sovereign entities—something increasingly evident in the transnational webs of our "globalized" world—borders have multiple meanings and realities. They are psychological and emotional as much as political. Unfortunately, however, they are increasingly represented by the political establishment and a wide sector of opinion leadership as a source of suspicion and fear. This perception weakens relationships across boundaries and disrupts local and cross-border arrangements, both old and emerging.

Given the prominence of the southern border in current policy and media attentions, we concern ourselves largely with the persuasiveness and problems of national and border security narratives associated with the northern border. We contend that narratives carry power, whether used by private parties or by states. Because an important dimension of the change in the Canada-U.S. border is the way we talk about it, there are strong reasons for concern regarding the implications of how the "undefended Canadian border"—once a source of great pride—has been transformed in post-9/11 narratives as a dangerous vulnerability in the United States' quest to ensure the protection of what is increasingly being referred to as the homeland.

CANADA-US BORDER: FROM BENIGN TO MALIGN

The exceptional character of long stretches of the Canada-United States border is beyond question—extending from the thinly populated, highly forested expanses of the eastern provinces, through the Great Lakes and vast prairies in the center of the continent, to the mountainous west, and the fragile Arctic. The border itself is often not demarcated at all, or may be no more than a line of rocks, ditch or country road. However, though the notion "longest undefended border" evokes an image of relative tranquility, the northern border has never been without security activity. Militarization of the Great Lakes occurred during the War of 1812, but ended with the Rush-Bagot Treaty of 1817. There followed, for most of the 19th century, a long period in which border policing ac-

tivity was intermittent and generally involved matters of law and order. Policing, sometimes reinforced by federal troops, was not a matter of defending a boundary line as much as it was responding to Indian "problems" and controlling bands of marauders who exploited the border for a variety of reasons. Prohibition-associated smuggling and other contrabanding were prominent concerns in the first half of the 20th century. More recently, largely because of the lucrative north-south and south-north drug trade and the increase in human trafficking and smuggling, policing at the border increased in the 1990s. For example, International Border Enforcement Teams (IBETS), which join law officials from adjacent jurisdictions on either side of the border to address transnational crime issues, began in 1996.

Concerns about transnational crime, however, did not radically transform the depiction of the border as business-friendly and highly porous. In fact the paradigm of an "open" northern border (open for people and open for business) was a central factor in the creation of NAFTA and the various border accords negotiated in the 1990s. Exports and imports, both northward and southward, increased yearly between 1995 and 2000. Expediting and increasing the flow of goods and capital was a prime objective of NAFTA. Thus, border managers and stakeholders focused on making the border as passable and unobtrusive as possible. New ports of entry were opened, and old ones updated; staffing increased and special dedicated border crossing lanes were introduced for frequent crossers (PACE and CANPASS). Borders were increasingly spoken of as "gateways" important for commerce and cultural transactions. The idea of north-south corridors, running from Canada to Mexico, prompted creation of many new transboundary organizations in the Pacific Northwest and across the continent. Many began speaking of a border-free vision of North America and even of a borderless world.

If anything, the 1990s were a time of increased interest in minimizing (and for some, virtually eliminating) the border. The Canada-United States Shared Border Accord, signed in 1995, highlighted the need for close cooperation to protect the border's open character. Although the first World Trade Center bombing had occurred two years earlier, in 1993, the Accord had no specific anti-terrorism provisions. Other actions taken included the 1997 Border Vision Initiative through which the two governments attempted to harmo-

nize border management practices as much as possible to increase efficiency in the crossing of goods and people. A border "hardening" measure, the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, which under Section 110 required creation of a system for tracking the entry and departure of all aliens crossing the border, was vehemently opposed by business and stakeholder groups. This legislation, primarily aimed at the Mexican border, served to mobilize several border-wide coalitions concerned about negative trade impacts. Ultimately political pressure from business, as well as realization that it would be technically difficult if not impossible to track the departure of aliens, resulted in the postponement of the bill's implementation on land borders and seaports.

Border policing and security became more terrorist-centric with the capture of Ahmed Ressam, the so-called "Millennium Bomber" at Port Angeles, Washington in 1999. Ressam's arrest was the result of good intelligence work and the acuity of a well trained and highly alert border official. The highly publicized Ressam event, perhaps more than anything else, contributed to the emerging image of the Canadian border as dangerous, and it was instrumental in ramping-up policing and surveillance. In later testimony before Congress, a terrorism and security expert from the Rand Corporation noted that the Ressam incident revealed that "the border threat is not just a southern phenomenon; there is a threat from the north" (House of Representatives 2006).

The events of 9/11 brought a new sense of urgency regarding America's borders. The northern border suddenly became viewed as a security risk. Propelled by anxiety-ridden politicians in Washington, DC, and constant media hype about "broken borders," both the northern and southern frontiers were seen as equally in need of greater security personnel and more effective "controls" technology.

This new securitization doctrine led to what some described as the "Mexicanization" of the Canadian border (Andreas 2005). The number of border agents working at the northern border was tripled following 9/11. National Guard troops were sent to border posts to help with patrols and inspections. Five air and marine bases were planned for the northern borderlands. U.S. Coast Guard boats on the Great Lakes were given authorization to fire machine guns during training drills. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) deployed modernized sensors, infrared cameras, aerial drones, and

watchtowers along parts of the 4000 mile border across the lower 48 states. Unmanned surveillance drones began flying along the border in 2009. As Congress authorized billions to construct a high-security barrier along much of the southern border, bills also passed the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives mandating DHS to study the feasibility of building a fence on the Canadian border.

Easy mobility—vital for commerce and long established social networks—was no longer the operative condition. "Security trumps trade" became the new mantra. Because the long unprotected northern border was seen as an opening for terrorists who could easily use Canada as a staging ground from which to cross into the United States, Canada became an integral part of the U.S. national security narrative. Indeed, the U.S. State Department's 2005 *The Country Reports on Terrorism* stated that Canada's "liberal immigration and asylum policies" have given terrorists safe haven for fund raising and planning for attacks (see Gilbert 2007, note 16).

In response to the new security emphasis, many business groups, led by chambers of commerce from northern tier states, spoke loudly and forcefully about the practical dangers of excessively hardening the northern border. Increased border controls were viewed as a serious economic threat to many cross-border corporations and border region-dependent businesses and communities. Statistics showing that Canada-U.S. trade supports millions of jobs in the U.S. and that thousands of businesses are supplied by Canadian firms were trumpeted to Congressional leaders, governors and the media.

Yet, the voices of business were not uniform when it came to border-related commercial interests. Lucrative border security contracts for expensive and ambitious projects such as the Secure Border Initiative (SBI), a multi-billion dollar project to provide high tech virtual security on the northern and southern borders, ensured that border security would become a part of the military industrial complex, thus furthering the intersection of corporate interests and national security. Business interests have also been conflicted over the controversy about illegal immigration. With cheap labor dependent on a continuing supply of undocumented migrants, increased territorial securitization in North America, to be politically acceptable, would have to be implemented in the most business benign way possible.

If increasing security and facilitating cross border economic flows seemed at odds, a solution would be found in the creation of borders that would be both secure and enabling. Such borders would expedite security while enhancing the flow of goods. Security and trade imperatives needed to be merged into a broader "secure trade" formula. Thus, the Canada-U.S. border was "reinvented" as a smart border. Smart meant the Canada-U.S. border would work like a screen—or filter—through which legitimate goods and people would pass with minimal interference. Goods would be screened for illicit items and people checked in accordance with pre-determined risk categories. This would be done using new inspection technologies, biometrics, cargo tracking mechanisms and innovative traffic management strategies. In short, the focus would be on "developing techno-border controls for heightened security risks, while decreasing the chances of interrupting the flow of goods and services" (Nicol 2006, 60).

SMART BORDERS OR TERRORCENTRIC TECHNOCRATIC BORDERS?

At the heart of the smart borders approach are programs and processes for classifying and managing risk. Risk management approaches, based on cost benefit calculations, are designed to allocate scarce border management resources in ways that focus on high-risk goods and people. As Stephen Flynn described it, "The goal must be to limit the size of the haystack in which there are most likely to be illicit and dangerous needles" (Flynn 2002, 3). Risk management programs rely on high tech and sophisticated information processes to "sort" desirable and undesirable flows. Agreements among governments and businesses allow for the exchange of specific types of information such as airlines' passenger data and intelligence about travelers, migrants and citizens. Trusted traveler programs, NEXUS on the northern border, SENTRI on the southern border, were devised to afford quick passage through special lanes for citizens who could be certified through extensive background checks. For commercial interests, programs were developed by industry in partnership with government to pre-certify trucks, drivers and companies so they could take advantage of special Free and Secure Trade (FAST) lanes. The FAST program has been marketed to business as a competitive advantage because its goal is to expedite cargo more quickly across the border.

Although such sorting is heralded as the most effective and practical way of reconciling open commerce with tightened security, ascertaining who or what is at risk is always problematic. Determination of risk from non-risk is highly subjective because authorities charged with administering risk management programs rely on data processes that are unreliable and prone to excesses. The widely reported airline "watch lists" are illustrative of this problem. Literally thousands of citizens find they are on the list, often only because their last name is the same or similar to someone who is deemed suspicious.

Risk management strategies raise significant issues. For pre-approved or "certified" trusted travelers, voluntary, in depth background checks search for legal violations, which often are only minor and irrelevant to security. The implied assumption in these programs is that there is some reasonable connection between a past legal violation—no matter how minor—and future criminal intent. Determinations of suspicion and who gets to count as low or high risk are influenced by profiling and class categories. Inevitably, judgments about inclusion and exclusion lack discretion and passion when the means of classification are governed by processes and officials far removed from the actual circumstances of border crossers. Marginal groups are most vulnerable when risk is displaced from predetermined "safe" to "unsafe" populations (Amoore and deGoode 2005). Gilbert (2007,18) points to the danger of categorizing marginalized persons—from drug users to undocumented immigrants—as if they can be situated along a security continuum. Devising social categories of risk inevitably leads to judgments about which individuals or groups ought to be suspect and therefore excluded from political or economic benefits (Lyon 2003).

The ascendancy of technological solutions to respond to terrorist threat entailed rapid emergence of a series of new binational or trinational frameworks, which were more layered, continental, and costly. While East-West land borders had prominence, borders were also to be pushed outward through a widening security perimeter. In addition to smart border technological fixes that focused on internal border infrastructure, the idea of an enlarged zone of security based on North American perimeter borders worked its way into border management language. Perimeter approaches are strategies for screening goods and people before they enter North America. Under the perimeter approach cargo containers are pre-

cleared at the source. Individuals undergo processing at embassies in the sending country and are provided with secure documentation. Airlines and shipping companies are made liable for movement of contraband and unauthorized travelers. In effect, the idea was that American borders would be pushed-out, or diffused, as "virtual" borders throughout the world.

The smart borders paradigm was officially articulated in the Smart Border Declaration between the United States and Canada, signed in December 2001, just three months after the momentous events in September. The accord was organized into four categories: secure flow of people, secure flow of goods, secure infrastructure, and coordinated plan for implementation and enforcement of these objectives. The accord was given top level support from both U.S. and Canadian governments. Action plans were implemented almost immediately. Following on this, a similar accord was reached with Mexico, titled the US-Mexico Border Partnership Agreement, and signed in March 2002. The categories for action were essentially the same as the Canada-US agreement. However, for Mexicans the focus on security from terrorists was at best only grudgingly accepted. It was seen as redirecting energy away from more salient issues such as migration, gang violence and public health issues at the border (Meyers 2003).

The Bush administration heralded the smart border as a policing system that "keeps pace with expanding trade while protecting the United States and its territories from the threats of terrorist attack, illegal immigration, illegal drugs, and other contraband" (cited in Coleman 2005, 199). Clearly, in the U.S. framework, borders were increasingly seen as instruments for controlling the dangerous flows—both material and human—emanating from the outside world. From a smart borders/risk management perspective, adequate control of borders presumed a balance between providing security and facilitating legitimate movement of goods and people. By the time of the ascendancy of Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff, the smart border management paradigm, according to Edward Alden (2008), had been reformulated in accordance with the U.S. policy goal of exercising total control over borders, north and south.

Because both the northern and southern borders were viewed as key elements in U.S. territorial security, the concept of a broader North American agreement emerged as a building block for a more

robust continental security community (Chanona 2006). At the 2005 Waco, Texas summit, leaders from all three countries formed the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP), a trilateral understanding for developing a common continental approach to security as well as forging greater economic cooperation in North America.

The SPP process was an attempt to bring greater coordination to security and border facilitation activities. Its avowed goal was to strengthen overall North American prosperity and security by improved coordination and alignment of border and regulatory processes (Craik and DiMento 2008). Increased recognition of the interdependence of competitiveness and efficient border management was a core principle of the SPP (Ackleson and Kastner 2008, 25).

The SPP was an initiative by the three governments to cooperate on common issues ranging from security to food safety. In structure, the initiative lacked the formality of a treaty or over-arching binding agreement. Essentially, it is comprised of several agendas, involving officials from each country's respective executive branch agencies, to be advanced over prescribed time periods, ranging from medium to long term (Ackleson and Kastner 2006, 216). In working terms, the SPP relied on sector to sector negotiations through mid-level government working groups. In concept, the SPP is built on the idea that a North American security community transcends internal land borders. It is based on the concept of a virtual "security perimeter" where security is grounded in synchronization of North American government programs and perceptions of threat, and enhanced trilateral cooperation to include a range of contingencies, including emergency preparedness, food safety, protection against crime and the protection of the region's infrastructure. This expansive conception of security was linked to prosperity, and in general to furthering democracy and ultimately the integration of purpose on the continent. Some viewed the SPP as a building block in the quest for continental union led by the U.S. We may more accurately consider it a mechanism for deepening North American economic and security integration based on a newly perceived close interdependence of market forces and continental security.

The architects of the SPP had no intention of diminishing the North American interior borders as security tools. Building on the smart borders concept, they maintained hardened northern and southern borders increasingly harmonized through compatible inspections standards and the utilization of biometrics and increased

exchange of intelligence. A cornerstone of the Bush policy of layered security, the SPP is a less favored strategy in the new Obama administration.

The transformation of the border is probably most strikingly evident in the sequential implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). Created by the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, the so-called "passport law" established document requirements for travelers entering the United States who were previously exempt, including citizens of the U.S. and Canada. A major justification for the WHTI, articulated by the 9/11 Commission, was the need for U.S. border officials to have a common, universally understandable document to screen all persons entering the United States. Evidence submitted to the 9/11 Commission reported that approximately 40 per cent of Canadian and U.S. border crossers were routinely not asked for either a driver's license or photo ID when crossing the border (www.besttcoalition.com/files/gorton_WHTI_Hearing_Testimony.pdf). The 9/11 Commission concluded that

> Americans should not be exempt from carrying biometric passports or otherwise enabling their identities to be securely verified when they enter the United States; nor should Canadians or Mexicans. Currently U.S. persons are exempt from carrying passports when returning from Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean. The current system enables non-U.S. citizens to gain entry by showing minimal identification. The 9/11 experience shows that terrorists study and exploit America's vulnerabilities.
>
> (The 9/11 Commission Report)

When fully implemented in June 2009, all travelers, including U.S. citizens, are required to have a passport or other accepted document that establishes identity and citizenship upon entry or re-entry into the U.S. from Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean and Bermuda. WHTI-approved travel requires one of the following: a passport, a NEXUS travel card (U.S./Canada), a SENTRI travel card (U.S./Mexico), the more recently introduced U.S. Passport Card, or an enhanced driver's license issued by state or provincial governments in the U.S. and Canada.

The WHTI, perhaps more than other post-9/11 border control measures, signified a major shift in approach to the northern border. For one thing, unlike other border management changes, the WHTI

was an entirely unilateral action taken by the U.S. Perhaps more important, it fundamentally altered the traditional "informality" of border crossings that was integral to the culture of the Canada-U.S. relationship. Such informality was taken for granted for more than a hundred years. In a speech given in 2006 in Washington, D.C., Stockwell Day, then Canada's Minister of Public Safety, characterized the WHTI as a "shock to our collective system" (Weitz 2007). Opposition to the WHTI came from many quarters: business groups were concerned about harm to cross border commerce; the travel industry worried about reduced tourism travel; aboriginal groups insisted the WHTI was in violation of their treaty rights of free passage; mayors and state and provincial officials claimed the new documents requirement would negatively affect the economic and social fabric of border communities and states and provinces adjacent to the border; and many civil liberties groups in both Canada and the U.S. raised serious questions about the protection of personal information that would have to be yielded to WHTI-linked data bases.

The idea of an enhanced driver's license (EDL) as an alternative secure document to the passport was prompted by the WHTI. Worried about the negative impacts of the WHTI on cross-border trade and tourism, groups in Washington State and British Columbia devised the idea of a driver's license that could fulfill the new document requirements of proof of citizenship and identity. Strongly supported by two regional cross-border organizations (the Business for Economic Security Tourist and Trade (BESTT) Coalition, and the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER)), and backed by the Governor of Washington State and the Premier of British Columbia, the EDL was promoted as a less expensive, less intrusive, yet secure document that would minimize the disruption expected with the implementation of the WHTI. Citing the 35 million dollars in goods flowing both ways daily through the U.S.-Canadian border crossing at Blaine, Washington State Governor Chris Gregoire said the EDL alternative would help the state and province protect cross border commerce as well as help to facilitate cross border travel during the 2010 Olympics and Paralympics Winter Games, to be held in Vancouver (Bolt 2007). The EDL was especially attractive to near-border business groups because most cross-border passenger travel is for discretionary recreation, family and shopping activities that begin and end in border communities. The EDL, because of its low cost

($15 in Washington State) and convenience (most EDL holders sign up when they renew their driver's license) has become a popular option in Washington State. Many other jurisdictions on both sides of the border have followed suit.

Without question the border has been transformed. From what was once a relatively open and casual line functioning primarily to demarcate sovereign policy spaces, the border has become primarily an instrument for control since 2001. The porosity of the land border and therefore its permeable nature, a defining feature of the unique relationship between Canada and the U.S. and an essential part of the mode of living within borderlands, has since 2001 become equated with vulnerability (Alden 2008; Hernandez 2007). Thus, from the perspective of DHS, the border has become an object of continuing concern that needs to be constantly monitored and closely controlled. As Muller (2008) points out, the border-as-vulnerability mindset generates demands for additional technology and infrastructure to deal with risks that have no end point. This in turn fosters further insecurity. From this perspective the highly porous border, which has come to define and shape the socio-economic fabric of borderlands, became intolerable.

THE IMPACT OF THICKENED BORDERS

A national border divides, but it also connects. The extent to which it does one or the other varies due to history, culture and political and economic processes. Political nationalism and insecurity heighten the sense of division. Social, cultural and environmental affinities and economic interaction strengthen the sense of connectivity. Greater securitization, and therefore controls, sustained by alarmist rhetoric and images (Chavez 2001; Payan 2006), inevitably generate psychological as well as physical barriers, which hinders the free flows of ideas as well as people and products. Ultimately, such barriers endanger forms of exchange and interaction that are vital to overcoming the asymmetry of knowledge and attention that afflicts the United States' relations with both Canada and Mexico.

Although the Canada-U.S. border has always been a marker of differentiation between the two societies, easy interaction has been a hallmark of this relationship and an example to the world. Cross-border contacts of all types—soccer clubs, environmental partnerships, business associations, student exchanges, tourist travel, shopping and overall trade—have given the regional cross-

border interactions and general relationship a social and economic dynamism unprecedented in the world. By the end of the 1990s, the Canada-U.S. border and borderlands were viewed not as markers of security and control, but increasingly as a set of corridors and places of articulation for people and goods between the two nations (Konrad and Nicol 2004). Indeed, increasing attention was given to the growing cross-border regions across the continent. There was speculation about a future of border-transcending spatial communities with names and characterizations such as *urban confederations* (Kaplan 1998), *new regional order* (Kelly 1994), *new binationalism* (Schell and Hamer 1995), *region states* (Ohmae 1993), *Pacifica* (Edgington 1993), and *mainstreet Cascadia* (Agnew 1998, Pivo 1995).

The new post-9/11 focus on security has changed the language and debate about borders. The complex reality of border regions as hubs of trade, conduits of socio-economic interaction and foci of ecosystem protection gave way to a new reality of security as the almost singular function on which border policy would pivot (Hernandez 2007).

As borders are both physical and psychological, so too their hardening carries implications that are more than material alone. To assess the impact of the increased securitization of the Canada-U.S. border, we briefly examine three areas: economic impacts, institutional impacts affecting the movement of people, and social and cultural impacts.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS: TRADE AND TOURISM

Economic impacts resulting from increased border security have been well documented in the literature. In overall material terms, it is clear that increased border security has had a negative impact on U.S. merchandise trade with Canada and Mexico (Moens and Cust 2008, Goldfarb 2007, Globerman and Storer 2006, Walkenhorst and Dihel 2006, Olmedo and Soden 2005, Ontario Chamber of Commerce 2005, Quayes and Pescatrice 2004). These studies show that increased security negatively affected trade beyond what would have been expected by economic downturns and other business cycle phenomena in the three countries in the years following 9/11. Enhanced border security works as a "non-tariff tax" on goods that pass through the border because of higher processing costs and delays at border check points (Taylor and Robideaux 2003). Gauging the full impact on trade is beyond the scope of this paper, but a few

examples are suggestive. Compliance practices and programs have cost Canadian trucking companies upwards of $290 million (Gordon 2007). New risk management practices (e.g., C-TPAT, PAPS, and others) that allow shippers to use dedicated lanes to avoid long line-ups and delays are attractive, but very costly. As these programs become known to firms who buy transshipped goods (e.g., Home Depot, Walmart, etc.), shippers are almost forced to join the program or face losing business. The high costs of being a "certified shipper" are almost impossible to absorb by smaller companies.

The impact on tourism is seen in the reduced volume of tourists crossing the border in both directions since 9/11 (Public Diplomacy Watch 2007), although the volume of Canadians traveling to the U.S. improved in 2007-2008 largely as a result of the weaker U.S. dollar. A great deal of anecdotal evidence suggests that aggravation and even humiliation have taken a toll on discretionary border crossings. A survey reported in *Newsweek* online in February 2007 showed that business travel into the United States declined by 10 percent in the previous two years when many European and Asian cities showed strong increases (http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/17201007/site/newsweek/). Border crossings from Canada to the U.S. following 9/11 have remained at or below pre-9/11 levels, despite the incentive of a higher valued Canadian dollar during the five years preceding 2006 (Border Policy Research Institute 2006a). A survey conducted by the Discover America Partnership (2007) found that foreigners perceive the American border to be one of the most unfriendly in the world. Increasingly, neighbors to the north and south are annoyed by what they perceive as American disinterest, rudeness and arrogance. A study released by the World Economic Forum and Booz Allen in March 2008 ranked U.S. "citizens' openness toward foreign visitors" at 114th place (http://www.boozallen.com/news/39496838). To add further stress to cross border tourism, new passport requirements are likely to reduce "casual day-only" border crossings that make up an enormous proportion of the tourism economies of U.S. northern border communities (BPRI 2006b). For example, the projected dollar impact of lost Canadian tourism dollars in Whatcom County in the northwest corner of Washington state, following the WHTI's full implementation, is projected to be approximately $10 million dollars per year (BPRI 2006a). A 2007 study by the consulting firm InterVISTAS projected that tougher document requirements could cost Whatcom County 2000 jobs (Stark 2007).

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES: MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

Although many of the impacts associated with increased securitization are material and psychological, institutional changes bear implications for cross-border mobility.

U.S. Visit (a part of the Immigration Reform Act of 1996) mandates the development of technology to track the entry and exit of all visa-carrying foreign visitors who enter the United States. Although Canadians, except those requiring visas, have been given a waiver from U.S. Visit, many observers believe this exemption will be eliminated in the future. Under the program, travelers entering and exiting the U.S. would be identified by two biometric identifiers (digital fingerprints, iris scans, digital photos, etc.), with the data checked against a federal data base. The system, called the Automated Entry-Exit Control System, is operating in airports and at land ports of entry. With more than 700 million annual traveler arrivals, the system involves an enormous expenditure in personnel and infrastructure. U.S. Visit has been criticized for its high cost and unreliable technology. But its major shortcoming is that it has no way of locating individuals who overstay their visas, nor does it have a workable system for "checking-out" visitors. In December, 2006, DHS, citing high costs and unreliable technology, halted plans to implement U.S. Visit at land borders. This program has cost more than $1.7 billion since 2003.

As discussed above, the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) fundamentally challenges the casual mobility that has been the key building in the development of cross border regions. New documents' requirements will add mobility barriers at a time when there is need for greater—not less—regional integration in border areas. Research by Harlan Koff (2006) suggests that border regions experience fewer security problems when cross border economic and social engagement is encouraged. Research also shows that border processes that restrict or impede the flow of people and commerce have the unintended effect of stimulating more dangerous clandestine activity because criminal organizations gain power by capitalizing on restrictions and differences at the border (Pellerin 2005). Moreover, as the border crossing public becomes more stratified, serious equality-of-treatment issues are likely. Kelly (2006, 9) states:

> If a citizen has to pay for an ID card that endows the bearer with special privileges, such as a passport or pass

card, then the economically underprivileged automatically become bigger targets for law enforcement. If you can't produce the document that ostensibly proves you are not an illegal immigrant or terrorist, you fall immediately under suspicion.

Policies related to immigrants and refugees have also become increasingly restrictive. Despite international accords to which all North American parties are signatory, and in the case of Canada a long time commitment to humanitarian principles with regard to displaced peoples, security concerns have led to tightened requirements for people seeking refuge or relocation.

Immigration is the key to the diversity which is a vital building block for future intercultural understanding and prosperity. Thickened borders constrain all forms of migration, including turning away skilled immigrants whom the U.S. is increasingly losing to countries such as Australia and New Zealand (Woroby 2007).

IMPACT ON SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FABRIC

The Canada-U.S. borderland is a dynamic social and economic area. The enormous flow of goods, capital and people has created an unprecedented historically stable and cohesive set of cross-border relationships. Bukowczyk (2005, 3), writing about the Great Lakes region, describes the Great Lakes and other cross-border regions as "landscapes of action, of meaning, and of experience in which place interacted with people, not merely containers or vessels in which human action happened." Indeed, in many places on the Canada-U.S. boundary the border straddles mutually interdependent communities, residences and businesses. The boundary is unmarked along much of its more than 4000 miles. Some border crossings have functioned on the honor system, whereby travelers have been obliged to simply "call in."

Without question, the Canada-U.S. border has historically functioned far more like a bridge than a barrier. Easy cross-border interaction has been a hallmark of this relationship, visible in soccer clubs, environmental partnerships, business associations, student exchanges, tourist travel, shopping, professional sports, and service clubs. A tapestry of cultural, economic and social experiences interweaves the people of the two countries. Interconnectedness in some places means hybrid communities—where even buildings

and parks straddle the boundary. A U.S. Border Patrol supervisor, when asked about a wall on the border, said:

> You cannot do it; absolutely not...People have their farms on the other side, their aunts and uncles too... the U.S.-Canada border is a living organism—a life and a culture; we try not to disturb it." (Ackleson 2000, 10)

Researchers have found that where nations have increased border controls, even when there are no bilateral disputes, the culture of the relationship changes (Donaldson 2005). The targeted neighbor feels put upon and treated as if there is a conflict when none exists. The costs include slowed momentum for working in common to solve problems, the dividing of cross-border community and commercial relationships, and growing suspicions and reluctance to engage. Long use of a kind of "binational currency" consisting of shared experiences and acceptance may be undermined, even as respective national dollars may continue to be exchanged. Borderland spaces are much more than commercial domains. They are places of transnational civic engagement. As such they serve as conduits of intercultural communication.

This changing psychological dimension of the Canada-U.S. relationship cannot be taken lightly. The long term effects of hardened borders are worrisome. As noted above, the Canada-U.S. borderlands are places with rich and vibrant social, economic and cultural histories. Success in dealing with common problems—whether over the environment, agriculture, emergency management or transportation—depends on ease of interaction and good will. None of this is helped by border rhetoric that presents images of exclusion, threat and virtual fences or walls. As these representations have become more common in the way we talk about borders, we are in danger of constructing a redefined continental setting where new symbolic meanings of "us" and "them" are a part of the Canada-U.S. narrative.

BORDERS WITHIN

The term *homeland security* itself gives new meaning to North American borders—as the first and/or last line of defense to protect the homeland. The new terminology raises vexing questions of what is home and who belongs there. The quasi-religious assertion of homeland seems strangely oxymoronic in an America that prides itself as an immigrant society. The term "homeland", when set in the

context of America's multicultural history, serves to reconstruct the idea of the American nation and its relation to the exterior world. Given a history in which immigrants are as likely to be seen as a threat to national security as they are welcomed for their skills and potentials, concern about the "defense of the homeland" invariably drifts into anxiety about internal social and cultural boundaries.

Expanded securitization rhetoric and practices are associated with the highly emotive language of homeland security. Although securitization is associated with all forms of threats to collective well being, the additive of "homeland" to "security" implies that what is at stake is highly local, communal and personal. Securitization of the homeland implies that "normal rules" that usually apply are insufficient. Extraordinary means may be required. Such escalation is easily transformed into institutionalized fear. Once legislated or codified into law, fear becomes hard to overcome and harder still to remove. Stereotypes are promoted under such conditions – so people who don't speak English, for example, must be more suspect than those who do. There is considerable historical and anthropological evidence that those who are different are imagined as the "other," with ignorance based on fear transformed into protectionism, or what Saul (2005) calls "negative nationalism." Those not considered close are pushed to the margins, even expelled. Pallitto and Heyman (2008, 317) suggest that immigration issues, now increasingly laced with homeland and national security implications, are easily and frequently contextualized as akin to a struggle for cultural survival.

While border enforcement is ostensibly about controlling inward migration of non-citizens and curtailing terrorists and criminals, it cannot be separated from curtailing threats to domestic stability, which can easily translate into countering perceived challenges to the status quo. By screening people more suspiciously and antagonistically at borders and inside borders (Zureik and Salter 2005), we are at the same time in danger of inhibiting public thought from accepting people who are different, much less understanding them. People considered sufficiently different from prevailing norms—on the basis of color, class, culture, or creed, for instance—may become the objects of suspicion along with immigrants and refugees themselves. Thus, as Cote-Boucher (2008) points out, ultimately exclusionary border policies, although intended for facilitating and hindering certain kinds of mobilities from entering the nation, also

extend inside the territory for surveillance of citizens and non-citizens that intelligence agencies consider to be potentially dangerous. This may have ominous implications for minority members of host societies and foreigners alike (see Caincar 2004). In the long term, racial and class fissures can deepen if homeland and nationalism becomes more synonymous with ethnocentric notions of populations who are deemed more American, or less "foreign." History is replete with sobering examples of potential tragic consequences.

NOT-SO-SMART BORDERS: RECONCEPTUALIZING BORDER SECURITY

Territorial borders are social constructions, and the act of bordering and re-bordering involves the critical question of who exercises power to determine what the border will be. Related to this is the question of what reality is being created when we institutionalize a form of bordering that is based on "threat" from the "other." And at what price? As the barrier function of borders becomes more deeply institutionalized into the domestic mind set, the idea of a border as a place of connecting—whether in the form of commercial activity or social and cultural interaction—is diminished, resulting in domestic populations becoming border averse. The slowdown in cross border North American trade after 9/11 and the dramatic decrease in discretionary cross border travel are symptomatic of this new reality. For border crossers, both actual and potential, the border has become an edifice that produces anxiety, discomfort, and often fear. At a time when new economies are increasingly dependent on the easy flow of talent and commodities, and when borderlands help to mediate intercultural understanding, the border as gateway metaphor has never been more important. The border security-crime nexus perpetuates a view of borders as sites of exclusion as well as instruments for greater regulation of the population and citizenry. Pratt (2005, 222) suggests how the representation of risks, dangers, and uncertainties that increasingly shape border discourse reproduces border insecurity. As conventional global discourse about the reality and inevitability of open borders fades, so too does clarity about who may or may not pose a danger.

While the borders being created under U.S. (and Canadian) security strategies may or may not be safer—and to date nobody has produced hard evidence that they are safer—they do not appear terribly "smart" with respect to advancing binational cooperation, a

prerequisite to the overall common goal of enhancing security and well being. For one thing, ramped up border security practices appear to serve as a net for catching a wide array of persons run afoul of the law, and creating a backlog of court cases, while generating protests from the public about random highway checks and inspections (Drost 2009). Unanticipated consequences of today's broad and expanding border security approach are socially and economically costly and can be detrimental to effective security programs which rely on public support and cooperation (see Meyers 2003, Drache 2004, Sassen 2006, Johnson and Trujillo 2007). Technocratic border policies, initiated and adjudicated at the federal level without adequate input from state and local levels, lessen accountability to the publics most directly affected by border control policies. This, in turn, can deepen disconnects between local populations and national centers, and thereby undermine legitimate preventive efforts against criminal activity.

To the extent that prevailing border controls are counterproductive in terms of increased social, economic and political costs, what would a more reasoned and fair policy look like? Focusing on the end point requires asking what borders do, and what we want them to accomplish. Improved technology and "management practices" are not the end point. They are only means by which the country attempts to achieve intended goals. If, on the other hand, the goal is to improve our shared ability to contain and control unwanted flows (criminals, contraband, terrorists, invasive species, etc.), strategies which invest in socio-economic development and empower citizens and stakeholders who are most proximate and affected should be undertaken. Strategies that promote more sustained local and regional input and an explicit addressing of differences lead to more organic cooperation, particularly through local cross-border connections that are longstanding, built of trust, and often intercultural in nature (Papademetriou and Meyers 2001, 17-18).

Thinking about borders as organic in nature provides useful guidance. Borders, like today's global cities, ultimately are processes as much as they are places. As manifestations of dynamic social and economic processes, borders are key to the natural and increasing interdependence of the North American partners (Loucky, Alper and Day 2008). More than simply spaces of mediation between cultures, borders mediate the future of the United States and all of

North America. It is from the border regions where such mediation occurs. It is here that the energy for positive integration is generated (Papademetriou and Meyers 2001, 28). Thus, the focus should be on strategies and visions that continue and increase the multiplicity of local and regional contacts, deepen bilateral engagement and, at the same time, emphasize pragmatic problem solving. As Papademetriou and Meyers (2001, 22-24) point out, securitization will not be successful unless it explicitly recognizes and respects the legitimate concerns of citizens in all three countries who wish to be protected from the undesirable elements of increased transnationalism (trafficking, gun smuggling, organized crime, transport of radiological substances, diseases, etc). This kind of "protection" needs to be acknowledged, but it cannot be approached jingoistically or unilaterally. Instead, actions should be fully bilateral (even multilateral where possible) to advance the security, prosperity and fundamental humanitarian interests of the transnational citizenry (Papademetriou and Meyers 2001, 23).

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