

Overview, Context, and a Vision for the Future

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IN TODAY'S GLOBAL ECONOMY, the increasing flow of goods and people across international borders is a topic of intense interest and incessant discussion. These intertwined phenomena are forcing a conversation about the changing nature of nation-states—a rather recent political construct, at least by historical standards—and, in essence, they may amount to the frontal assault on sovereignty many imagine. This conversation has been difficult to have in the abstract despite the array of forces pointing to its necessity, ranging from advances in technology and the steady devolution of political power to lower levels of government, to the long-rising power of multinational corporations and, more recently, that of civil society—which seems to be becoming increasingly important as a transnational force. Some observers point to an additional set of institutions and activities as further evidence of the systematic erosion of the power of the nation-state, particularly the various supranational institutions—such as the World Trade Organization or the European Union's (EU) bureaucracy in Brussels (the European Commission, EC)—as well as the increasing web of sovereignty-delimiting treaties, international agreements, and joint international actions of many forms. For the purposes of their arguments the fact that this loss of sovereignty occurs with the participating states' consent (whether given freely or obtained through pressure) does not change the basic logic.

These and similar analytical trends—the result of the vast increases

in economic and political interdependence (one may even say “integration”) that underlie a state’s robust engagement of the international system—seem to have sprouted philosophical roots consistent with the possibility that a Kuhnian “paradigmatic shift” in the conceptualization of the state may be in the offing. That is, we may be at the early stages of a process whereby the persistent questioning of a dominant construct (the nation-state) leads to the articulation of an alternative construct around which analytical agreement begins to coalesce (Kuhn 1962). If indeed we are witnessing such a shift, two of the inter-related philosophical constructs that have undergirded the modern nation-state—exclusive sovereign license over physical territory, and social and political “membership” (these constructs are frequently associated with such giants of modern Western thought as Max Weber and Hannah Arendt but in fact predate them by centuries)—may be among the twenty-first century’s many likely targets for reconsideration.

Other analysts, however, seem skeptical about both the validity and value of the preceding analysis. In some ways, they too sense the onset of a hinge point in how a state is likely to behave in the future toward the twin exclusivities of physical and socio-political “territory”; the change they perceive, however, is toward greater exclusivity and control, rather than their opposites. In defense of their perspective, these analysts point to compelling evidence that, in the post-Cold War era, most advanced industrial states have sought to strengthen their control capabilities by devoting ever-larger shares of their physical and political capital to a multifaceted regulation and control model. Although not all of these states employ all of this model’s facets with equal zeal, two of its components are widely used—those of “saturation policing” (Andreas 2001) and the massive investments of domestic and foreign policy capital made on issues of control. Others of the model’s components, however, are used with varying degrees of diligence and enthusiasm. For instance, the United States has been erecting physical barriers at its southwest border with relative abandon and has created substantial obstacles for both legal and unauthorized immigrants to gain access to its social safety net—while showing extreme ambivalence about other forms of interior control. Most other advanced industrial societies have so far avoided relying on physical barriers and have shown considerable discipline in resisting the urge to adopt U.S.-like cutoffs in social benefits—but show no reluctance to apply most forms of interior control.

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To be sure, for most people, maintaining (some will say “reasserting”) control over both entry and membership may be less a philosophical litmus test about one’s stand on sovereignty and more a test of the state’s willingness and ability to respond to a pronounced challenge. That is, the effort may have less to do with a philosophical or ideological need to “recapture” control of the state (presumably, from the grasp of transnationalism and its apostles) and more with an attempt to find an antidote to the increasing power of organized private interests seeking to exploit the weakening of national authority for illegitimate purposes. Without demeaning in any way the importance of political symbolism on these issues (Andreas 2001), it is the striving for effective governance and the responsible stewardship of public goods and resources that is likely to be behind current behavior in these respects.

At this writing (spring of 2001), there is little doubt which side is winning both the analytical and the political contest over whether or not the state is in retreat with regard to border (and membership) controls: advanced industrial states are indeed making ever-greater capital and political investments in ever-greater controls. To employ a sometimes useful academic expression, the state seems to have “come back in” with a vengeance. (Relatively little academic effort is devoted to examining whether the state was ever really “gone” or where it might be “going.”) As the state does so, however, there is a troubling lack of interest in applying an “effectiveness” test to the recent rush to controls through the independent evaluation of whether the effort is succeeding by any but the most counterfactual of measurements (see Andreas and Snyder 2000). More disturbingly, there is even less effort to think systematically about whether alternative responses to the challenge might have a greater or lesser chance of success. (A recent report on the U.S.-Mexico relationship is a notable exception to this trend—see U.S.-Mexico Migration Panel 2001.)

This seemingly mindless adherence to doing “more of the same” has had several perverse effects. Two of them seem particularly relevant for this analysis. First, it has largely papered over the human effects of the new enforcement status quo. One reputable academic team estimates that nearly 500 persons died at the U.S. southwest border in 2000 (Eschbach, Hagan, and Rodriguez 2001), a number that goes well beyond the ability of some to dismiss border deaths as regrettable but unavoidable “collateral” damage—“desperate people doing

desperate things.” Second, the current control regime has had a similar disregard for the policy’s effects on the communities in which people live and through which these goods and people pass—communities that have become the terrain where the manifestations of numerous conflicting perspectives play themselves out.

It is indeed the residents, businesses, and public and private institutions of border communities who most directly absorb the costs and benefits from both freer movement and greater controls. How do these communities navigate these issues, conflicting aims and all? What is life like for those who live and work at the interface of two countries? What is the local perspective on the movement of people and goods that pass through a community; does anyone else care about it? Does the perspective vary from one community, or one border, to another, and what accounts for any variance? What input, if any, do local communities have into national policies that ultimately affect them? What creative solutions have they found to address the challenge of such policies? This volume attempts to shed some light on all of these questions.

Two points of departure have been most dominant in informing the conceptualization of the research project whose results are reported on and analyzed in this volume. The first was a clear sense that, left on their own, national governments and bureaucracies would do what comes most naturally to them: national governments will reassert control in response to popular fears associated with the by-products of diminishing state authority and controls, and the relevant agencies will seek to convert such fears into additional resources—allowing them to grow in size and gain in influence. (Such influence, in turn, allows bureaucracies to inoculate themselves against attempts to reduce either their budget or their authority.) The U.S. Border Patrol and Germany’s border guards are excellent examples of this process at work.

Of course, responses will not be identical across all types of borders. For instance, when national borders are still the subject of some dispute (such as the Russia-China border or some of the Central American borders), are recent creations (such as the Russia-Kazakhstan border), or are separating two states that view each other with suspicion (such as Russia and China), the control impulse will easily trump most institutional forms of cross-border cooperation. More interesting may be, however, that notwithstanding that tendency, local cross-border

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initiatives continue to occur, even flourish, under all of these scenarios. The work of Solis (2000) and Kosach, Kuzmin, and Mukomel, this volume, point to many such examples.

The project's second point of departure was an attempt to examine an initially notional idea that after several years of upping the enforcement ante along the U.S. southwest border and elsewhere, many border communities had become concerned with the fact that decisions that affect them directly on issues of borders and their management were being made without their participation. In an era of pronounced devolution, much of it admittedly more rhetorical than real, that decision locus—exclusively in the national capitals, with little pretense of consultation with local communities—struck us as worthy of further investigation. We suspected that the continuing function of borders as the physical location where real and symbolic expressions of state sovereignty meet probably explained why domestic decisions about them are seemingly made “unilaterally” by central governments.

A related observation raised an additional red flag for us. Clearly, the urgency of securing a particular segment of the border and the availability of resources were the best predictors of where the border authorities would focus their efforts and how extensive and intensive the effort would be. Remarkably, however, there was seemingly little difference in how, from an enforcement methodology perspective, a government approached communities distressed by a loose border or those having no particular border-related problems—other than by focusing first on the former. In both instances, the management model seemed to be the same; if the manner in which it was applied seemed to be different in some places, such differences were principally a function of resources and of the personalities of and interactions among the relevant national agencies' local managers.

In fact, as we had hypothesized, a state's configuration as a unitary or a federal form of government and the degree to which it emphasized power devolution seemed to have had only a marginal effect on the inclusiveness (within a single state) of substantive decision making about the management of borders. For instance, Canada's at times seemingly pre-determined march toward confederation, its large and clearly defined areas of provincial power sharing and, indeed, primacy, and its abundant mechanisms and processes of federal/provincial co-decision making seem to lead to decisions about borders which

do not seem to be appreciably more or less unilateral than those of the United States or, for that matter, Mexico or Russia.

Two interrelated differences, however, remain most relevant among all borders studied in this volume. The degree of threat a state feels from a particular border determines how many resources it will commit to the border control effort. The effectiveness of the effort, however, seems to have only an uncertain association with the resources committed to border controls unless the nation is on a war footing. (The Israeli borders are a classic example of this last model.) In fact, and perhaps somewhat paradoxically, saturation policing and other forms of vigorous control seem to produce numerous perverse by-products. Most significant from the perspective of this volume may be the boom in official corruption and the growth in powerful black markets in virtually all aspects relating to the defeat of the control effort—from false documents to sophisticated smuggling networks. (Increases in human rights violations and, in the case of the U.S. Southwest, in the deaths of would-be illegal immigrants, as well as the increased potential for over-reactions to provocations of all types by either side, point to another set of perverse effects.)

The lesson? Unless the politics makes it absolutely impossible, governments are better off working cooperatively and with the market to expand the legal means for the entry of their nationals in other states' territories. The premise behind this course of action is that, as a rule, acknowledging the economic and social facts on the ground and regulating a practice thoughtfully stand a much better chance of achieving important public-policy goals than denying the legitimacy of some of the reasons for the practice's existence and trying to stamp it out through force.

A final aspect of the research further sets this volume apart. Rather than simply providing a case study of a particular border, the volume offers a broadly comparative perspective, reporting on research undertaken as part of the same effort on three different continents. It covers five international borders, over a dozen border regions, and dozens of crossing points. The research thus presents a unique opportunity to discern commonalities and differences among these regions, allows a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges differently organized border communities face, and identifies a broader range of local initiatives from which it is possible to cull "best practices" for

testing in other communities. In addition, the two-year project of which this edited volume is the culmination has strengthened existing networks of parties interested in this issue, has seeded new networks, and has promoted the widest possible sharing of information and experiences. Though the greater focus of the project has been on the management of migration-related issues, doing so was impossible without considering the broader context, including other kinds of cross-border interactions and cooperation between communities.

Research Aims

A state performs an array of inspection functions at the border, some of them obvious to any traveler. These include immigration and customs controls, as well as controls against the entry of certain agricultural products. Most of the functions, however, are much less visible. Among the latter are public health and public security functions, currency and financial control functions—still only a few of the nearly two dozen agency interests represented at a border inspection facility.

Many of these functions are clearly essential to good government; all serve some public interest. This fact, however, does not obviate the need to ask whether the functions are all essential, whether they can be done only at the border, whether the manner in which they are done is the most appropriate one, and how the lives of border communities are affected by how functions are delivered. Most importantly, perhaps, and like most governmental functions that are both very costly and intrusive, the delivery of the functions itself demands that the relevant agencies meet stringent effectiveness and accountability standards.

The region of most immediate interest for this research was North America, more specifically the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) region. The research sought to gain insights in three broad policy areas: first, how the NAFTA partners perceive and conduct their border “inspection” responsibilities; second, whether such inspections are done in the most effective and efficient manner—as well as in a manner that is consistent with interests in other important public policy priorities; and third, the effect of these actions on the life

of communities that straddle NAFTA's international borders. It was both intellectual curiosity and interest in comparative inquiry that broadened the scope of the research beyond its North American focus.

The expanded research maintained its focus on border community life as a consistent priority across all research sites. Hence the specific focus on the following three subjects: (a) cataloguing and understanding existing local initiatives toward greater cooperation between border communities located on different sides of an international border; (b) better understanding the similarities and differences in that regard among such communities; and (c) extracting and contextualizing "best practices" in local self-management with regard to cross-border matters. Field research results were then used to assess and develop a perspective on the state of integration within North America, and particularly within the North American Free Trade Agreement space, and to articulate a vision for such integration in fifteen or twenty years.

Review of Findings

The project's principal research hypothesis was that at the local level, communities on both sides of a common border were thinking (and when allowed, acting) creatively and often collaboratively in response to common problems and in pursuit of common interests. Although the degree of cooperation varies significantly across borders and border regions, in almost all instances examples of cooperation were found to exist—thus validating the hypothesis. In fact, the hypothesis held firm even in instances of fractured relationships between national governments—although cooperation under such circumstances typically takes place below the political radar screen of formal, government-to-government relations.

The motivation for cooperative contacts between cross-border communities varies widely. In some instances, the strongest factor tends to be a shared sense of abandonment by each state's national government and, in the new environment of power devolution, a sense that the central government may have turned some power over to them, but not the resources to implement properly the governmental

functions they are required to perform. In that regard, necessity or the sense of shared disenfranchisement is at the root of cross-border community cooperation. An attempt to organize the myriad of additional motivations yields the following: the need to address pressing community or intercommunity issues (such as environmental or law and order problems); scarcities in natural resources (especially water) and understanding the advantages of joint stewardship over such resources; practical matters such as maintaining and improving a shared physical infrastructure or using more efficiently whatever social infrastructure may be available to each side (such as medical and educational facilities and fire-fighting and emergency services); and, of course, the sense of a shared economic destiny.

The following are among the most robust general findings of the research. Although not all observations apply to all borders (many individuals and identifiable interests in border communities celebrate their distinctness), most border communities share a surprising number of the sentiments and practices identified below.

1. *The interests of border regions typically receive inadequate and at times unwelcome attention from national governments.* This is generally due to the fact that central governments think of their responsibilities toward borders within the framework of “reasons of state.” Such thinking, especially when “security” concerns enter the mix, reinforces the tendency of bureaucracies to make decisions unilaterally and leads to the devaluation of local dynamics and preferences.

Examples of this tendency abound. For instance, along the U.S.-Mexico border, anxiety about drugs and unauthorized immigration has led to fortifications and an active policing framework that gives short shrift to the border’s other principal function: facilitation of legal traffic and trade. The dominance of security concerns leads to roughly similar actions (minus the fortifications) at most of the European Union’s external borders, as well as at several of Central America’s borders (see Witt, this volume, Blatter and Clement 2000, and Solis 2000). In general terms, actions along much of the Russian-Chinese border and at some of the Russia-Kazakhstan border crossings, also discussed in this volume, follow similar patterns. As one might expect, unresolved issues about the demarcation of borders and strained political and military relations between contiguous neighbors further intensifies security concerns, which in turn enhances the

“value” of borders as defense perimeters and further downgrades local border community interests and community-initiated cross-border cooperation.

Conversely, when borders are not in dispute and when there is no particular sense of a security threat, light regulation tends to be the norm and facilitation becomes more important than controls. In such instances, local community interests tend to find greater space in which to grow and, under the right circumstances, to be heard. Among all borders studied in this project, only the Canada-U.S. border can be said to approach this latter model—although, until very recently, the two national governments’ interest in or capacity to listen to community concerns had been remarkably limited.

2. *National government policies toward border control tend to be inconsistent, even erratic, with patterns often ranging from inattention to the “wrong kind” of attention.* Both extremes kindle discontent and, except in emergencies, both can generate calls for more autonomy on trans-border issues of greatest concern to a locality or region. Communities along much of the U.S.-Canada border, as well as in some parts of the Germany-Poland and Germany-Czech Republic borders, desire greater autonomy—as do many communities along the U.S. southwest border. In many instances, however, communities make fundamentally contradictory demands. For instance, along the U.S. southwest border, many U.S. communities, while calling for greater order and security, simultaneously call for easier commercial access to consumers and to workers from across the border. This has been the norm also with some communities along the EU’s eastern borders.

Alternatively, rapid population growth (through natural increase, but especially through cross-border migration) and “unplanned” economic growth along a border contribute to pressures on the physical and social infrastructures and the environment that typically go unaddressed. This is a pattern seemingly typified along parts of the U.S.-Mexico border. Neighbors of similar (high) levels of development, however, seem to be better able to manage these issues—in large part because the “burdens” are more likely to be shared (through two-way traffic and use of public goods) and the resources for their amelioration are more readily available, but especially because local governance structures are more mature (see also below, point 10). Hence, disputes along the U.S.-Canada border, as well as at intra-EU “borders,”

seem to be much more capable of being handled cooperatively than those in either the Near or Far East of the former USSR, or for that matter, Central America.

3. *Most central governments use symbols and language that reinforce the imagery of borders as “zones of exclusion.”* One is often struck by the lengths to which some governments go to establish and demarcate their state’s distinctness and identity—from the display of massive flags to the creation of a no-man’s-land and the building of actual fortifications. Such views, however, often contrast sharply with those of the locals, who are much more likely to consider the border a place of commercial, social, and cultural interface, part of an often single community some of which just happens to be in a foreign political jurisdiction. Many communities along both U.S. borders feel (and act) this way, as do some of the German eastern border communities studied for this research project. Such perspectives and actions, however, appear to be rarer in the border communities of Central America and much of the former Soviet space. Lack of resources to build or maintain the physical infrastructure of border inspection facilities there, however, in some ways translates into less of a sense of a state of siege than is experienced in some parts of the U.S. southwest border!

4. *The adoption of a model of tight controls and the empowerment of border officials to exclude people with little accountability have become breeding grounds for arbitrary behavior by national government personnel; they also create more opportunities for corruption and encourage the growth of market forces designed to defeat border controls.* Nowhere is this phenomenon more evident than along the U.S. southwest border, although behavior at other borders follows the same general rule. As an example of arbitrariness, U.S. immigration officials at different crossings seem to interpret their authority to exclude inadmissible entrants quite differently, resulting in dramatically different outcomes. With regard to official corruption, international smuggling networks are now widely thought to be able to corrupt government officials virtually anywhere. Sometimes, corrupt behavior is broadly institutionalized and involves receiving community public officials at all levels (see Larin and Rubtsova, this volume).

5. *Border communities typically approach both the challenges and the opportunities of deeper cross-border relations in a remarkably pragmatic fashion.* Communities along the U.S.-Canada border typify this behavior;

although below the radar screen of newspaper headlines and the rhetoric of politicians, this is now a nearly universal phenomenon along uncontested borders (see Rodriguez and Hagan, this volume). In fact, as cross-border contacts increase, local officials from both sides, in partnership with business interests, religious organizations, and community-based and other nongovernmental actors, seek to play increasingly significant roles in the ongoing discussions about and the making and implementation of policies that affect their lives.

Clearly, not all communities are equally active in this regard and few are successful in influencing their fate in measurable ways. However, the existence of institutional frameworks that encourage and formalize input, such as those in the EU, can make a significant difference in outcomes. Two other factors also facilitate better cross-border understanding: the growth in cross-border civil society contacts, and official efforts to consider local perspectives along borders. Civil society contacts are growing seemingly by leaps and bounds, even if they are not always able to overcome vast asymmetries of experience and resources (see also del Castillo, this volume). Official efforts to better understand local perspectives are rare but, when agreed upon, can become an important impetus for change—if at least one of the parties commits its political capital and some of its treasure to that goal. The current U.S.-Mexico dialogue holds precisely such a promise, as does, to a less clear degree, the Canada-U.S. Partnership (CUSP) initiative agreed to in 1999.

6. *Business and commercial interests are the drivers of better cross-border relations across all research sites.* In fact, some observers argue that many border communities share a single business culture in what often amounts to symbiotic, even single, markets. This holds true regardless of the degree to which business contacts are formal or informal. Not everyone shares the enthusiasm of commercial interests for more cross-border openness, however, and, as a result, the vision of cross-border relations promoted by business interests can complicate matters when it is in conflict either with that of other local interests or with national priorities and regulations. Such conflicts typically involve issues of whether facilitating the entry of commercial products should take precedence over strict inspection goals, easing access by potential customers from across the border, and the ability to hire workers from a binational labor pool. These conflicts are further exacerbated when national regulations, or the way in which they are im-

plemented by representatives of national bureaucracies at the border, are internally contradictory or are thought to be at significant variance with the broader local economic life.

At times, local communities seek to take initiatives to redress the perceived imbalance. When this happens in the absence of clear national government mandates on an issue it can lead to “cowboy” behavior by local interests. The two studies appearing in this volume on Russian borders provide the most direct examples of such behavior—with the de facto devolution of the visa function in the Russian Far East to regional and local authorities, something that has occurred mostly by default, being the most direct example. Less pointed examples were found throughout the research sites, however, and were most often associated with the national governments’ “reach.” An example from internal NAFTA borders is the unusual zeal with which U.S. immigration authorities seem to apply the NAFTA rules on the entry of professionals from its NAFTA partners. The implementation of these rules leads to substantially different outcomes along the U.S. borders—which in turn leads to charges of arbitrariness by Canadian professionals.

7. *There is a remarkable degree of community-devised cross-border cooperation on issues such as public health, access to education, environmental protection, joint regional planning, and law enforcement.* In most instances, such cooperation seems to be unaffected by the ups and downs of the national conversation on borders and, more precisely, the conversation within a state’s capital. Local concerns about the tone and flavor of these conversations have been heightened by a growing appreciation that discussions about borders inside national capitals often are driven by caricatures and national political slogans and seem always either to over- or under-react to the real issues. Examples of these tendencies were found in all research sites—from Moscow’s conversations about a “silent invasion” by the Chinese and the EU’s gross overestimates of the likely migration effects of its eastward expansion, to America’s on-again, off-again preoccupation with Mexican migration.

Community views, on the other hand, are typically closer to the facts on the ground than is political rhetoric, and are better attuned to local needs and nuances. These range from a finer sense of increasingly common destinies and, perhaps to a lesser degree, human and ethnic solidarity. (As many of the authors of this volume make clear, however,

this should not be interpreted as suggesting that cross-border communities somehow share common worldviews or are either unaware of or unconcerned with the economic, social, identity, and governance issues that closer contacts imply.) The most pronounced examples of these forms of cooperation may be found along both U.S. borders, where legalized forms of deep cross-border cooperation abound; however, several communities along Germany's eastern borders and certain aspects of the Russia-Kazakhstan border relationship also show similar tendencies.

8. *Investments in the economic and social development of border regions and cities are at best an intermittent affair and tend to be inadequate even in the best of circumstances.* Models of how to invest in a border region include first, the distribution of significant funds through supranational institutions (the EU "Euro-regions" model—see Irek, Witt, and Schmidt and Salt, all in this volume), and second, the potentially very significant U.S. investments in transportation corridors (see Meyers and Papademetriou in this volume) which allow investments in Canada and Mexico—and to a more limited degree, vice versa. A third model, worth mentioning more for its potential than its concrete progress to date, refers to the embryonic U.S. development efforts at its southwest border, recommended in 2000 by the U.S. Government's Interagency Task Force for the Economic Development of the Southwest Border (President's Interagency Task Force 2000). Despite the change in administrations, many expect some of the Task Force's ideas to be converted into binational initiatives through the expansion of the capital base and the mandate of the binational North American Bank (NADBank), created by the NAFTA and charged primarily with addressing border environmental tasks. A final model comes from the Pacific Northwest, where remarkably well-organized cross-border public/private efforts have been able to make considerable progress in securing funding from state, local, and U.S. federal sources to pursue the objective of adapting national policies to the region's unique requirements and opportunities.

9. *There is an increasing array of experiments with a variety of "extra-territorial" arrangements designed to facilitate commercial and socio-cultural interests.* Most of the examples we found are in Europe and in North America, although certain Russia-Kazakhstan transborder activities fit this mold, as do many aspects of the German-Polish coopera-

tive activities outlined by Irek in this volume. For instance, the United States has experimented with permitting Mexican border inspection functions to be performed deep within U.S. territory during the Christmas season (in order to reduce delays at the border as large numbers of Mexicans return home for the holidays). The United States and Mexico have reciprocally expanded the zone for the less restricted movement of Mexicans in Arizona to 65 miles (and for Americans into Sonora for 100 kilometers), mostly as a means of encouraging access by Mexican nationals to U.S. commercial establishments. Furthermore, in most major Canadian airports the United States has a deeply institutionalized pre-clearance system for customs, immigration, and associated agencies for travelers to the United States, and together with Canada it is taking the first tentative steps toward sharing inspection facilities and related items.

10. *Next to being given short shrift by national authorities and the lack of resources, lack of “capacity” may be the border communities’ greatest problem.* It may be difficult to overemphasize this point. The capacity gap spans the gamut of activities along borders. It is clearly more pronounced in poorer countries, in remote border communities, and in the communities most recently delegated political power, although it also exists in communities lacking sufficient physical capacity to handle the ever-expanding traffic.

In some ways, the most relevant gap may be in governance—the ability of a community to organize itself to deliver in a relatively competent manner even the most elementary functions a government is expected to deliver. Making progress in this regard is very important: it can earn the confidence of the people and inspire private institutions to invest in the life of the community. Naturally, the lack of resources greatly intensifies the problem. The governance gap also manifests itself in the ability of a community to manage its relations with its national government with some effectiveness. Many parts of the U.S.-Mexico border (often on both sides of the border), Central American border communities, and most of the Russian borders studied for this project fit this pattern all too well.

However, the need for capacity building goes beyond governance and beyond the public sector. Institutions of all types are needed to undertake and complete any number of essential activities—from creating a functioning credit and financial market and maintaining and

enhancing the physical infrastructure, to beginning to plan and make the investments needed for setting up the most elementary components of a system of social infrastructure. And no social infrastructure gap is felt more strongly than those in the fields of education and health services. Frequently, a bad situation is made worse when domestic politics dictates that public goods controlled by the national government be distributed on the basis of party affiliation—“freezing out” states and localities that may have sided electorally with the losing side.

Gaps also are pronounced in the development of a culture of civil society that can hold the government accountable for its decisions and can play a part in the development of a broader base of social activism. In the absence of such “checks and balances,” corruption, much of it petty but no less entrenched, goes unchecked—and widens the public sector’s capacity gap. Examples of such gaps are revealed in the sharpest possible relief in this volume’s U.S.-Mexico border research (see especially del Castillo).

Recommendations for the NAFTA Partners

The rich and intricate tapestry of complex interdependence stitched together by the case studies in this volume makes clear that generalizations and, ultimately, policy recommendations need to exercise extreme care not to oversimplify. The case studies also make clear, however, that at borders where local communities engage in transborder relations, there is a great deal more going on than many analysts have suspected and, more to the point, than either national leaders or the national press have bothered to recognize.

In some instances there are a myriad of examples of building transborder “community”—an essential first step to the process of building the “North-American Community” that scholar-activist John W. Wirth envisioned in his 1996 essay. In other instances, residents themselves seemingly desire greater and more organic cross-border “integration,” as well as greater autonomy from the national government—or at least closer consultation with them by it—in affairs that affect them. This tends to be the case even though many communities simultaneously articulate desires for two seemingly contradictory policy responses.

The first aspires to the orderliness of tighter management and controls—a promise that governments seldom seem to be able to deliver effectively on, in an intensely interdependent world where economic competitiveness and economic well-being are closely tied to trade and commerce and to the speed and efficiency of those transactions. The second demands greater contact and openness, even going so far as to argue for opening the border to the far greater movement of people. This interest was documented most directly in a 2001 survey of the residents of communities on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border by the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute. The survey found that border communities along both sides of the border seem to be well ahead of or at significant variance with (a) how politicians see further “integration” (substantial majorities from both sides favored greater freedom of movement) and (b) how much and how quickly they think that U.S. border policies should be adjusted. (As one might expect, the majorities in favor were greater on the Mexican side of the border.)

What, then, might one recommend that is consistent with and moves toward the more open and cooperative future the research results discussed in this volume imply?

1. *Border controls should be conceptualized as a means to an end, rather than as the ultimate policy goal portrayed in political rhetoric and reflected in bureaucratic initiatives.* Put differently, the explicit end-goal of regulatory and enforcement efforts at the border should be to manage the border effectively enough to prepare the ground for the serious conversation about how best jointly to accomplish each neighbor’s principal public policy priorities while allowing more organic forms of integration to proceed at a reasonable pace. One implication of this recommendation is that the current set of discussions and initiatives regarding the NAFTA partners’ internal borders should continue to proceed roughly along the paths they have been following in the last year or so; *this must be accompanied, however, by an explicit reconceptualization and articulation of the desirable end point.* Focusing squarely on the greater use of technology and on management innovations that improve both facilitation and regulation and control must be part and parcel of this process—but, again, they must not be the end points of the NAFTA relationships.

The recently adopted (2000) Canadian Customs Action Plan, for instance, makes great strides toward these twin objectives. Yet, by the

Canadian authorities' own reckoning, these risk-management-based changes will overwhelm the initiative's capacity as early as 2004 (Policy Research Initiative 2001). This suggests the need for deeper changes. Stephen Flynn (2000, 58) also suggests an approach that centers on risk management, starting from a similar point of wishing to facilitate commerce while improving "security" in most ways. He sees the need for a three-part "paradigm shift" that focuses squarely on upstream, preventive approaches that stress mostly off-the-shelf technology, such as "smart" documents, and cooperative international mechanisms. Flynn's three prongs are as follows: (a) tightening security "within the international transportation and logistics system"; (b) insisting on transparent systems for "tracking regional and global commercial flows" that allow regulators to "conduct 'virtual' audits of inbound traffic"; and (c) developing "faster and stronger capabilities to gather intelligence and manage data."

For the U.S.-Canada border, continuing along the previous path but with a reconceptualization of the end point means ever-closer and more organic cooperation, a more explicit focus on understanding and addressing differences, and particularly, far more experimentation. For the U.S.-Mexico border, this means that Mexico's deeper engagement of the United States over the past decade must not just continue in earnest but in fact must accelerate further, and it must shift gears. This bilateral relationship is too important for either country to become distracted by the differences between them. Both President Fox and President Bush seem to understand this basic principle well enough, and have started on a negotiating course that shows extraordinary promise. Although that course's centerpiece is the migration relationship, the border cannot be left too far behind—if for no other reason than that it is deeply intertwined with the migration issue.

In fact, these discussions of the border must eventually be engaged in by all three NAFTA partners. The discussions should be initially bilateral and should explore interest in and set the parameters for negotiations about changing the current border-management paradigm. The fact that both the United States and Mexico have new executive leadership which, in the case of Mexico, is willing to ask for the re-evaluation of the current border "management" paradigm¹ and in the U.S. case appears somewhat receptive to that request, should be embraced as an opportunity to start the relationship anew—while ac-

knowledging and building upon many of the mostly procedural breakthroughs the previous governments had made.

Similarly, newly re-elected Canadian Prime Minister Chrétien must decide whether his often “improvisational” (Cooper 2000) relations with the United States are likely to work as well with Mr. Bush’s administration as they apparently did with Mr. Clinton’s. Mr. Chrétien’s policy of “calculated ambivalence” (Cooper 2000) has been clearly rooted in the Liberal Party’s traditional ambivalence about the relationship with the United States and in the need to distinguish the Liberals’ policies from those of the predecessor Mulroney government. The question Mr. Chrétien and his advisors must now answer is if this posture moves Canada toward making real progress toward a worthwhile vision of the U.S.-Canada (and, eventually, NAFTA) relationship fifteen or so years from now.

2. *All three national governments must show uncharacteristic adeptness in adapting their border management and enforcement practices to local conditions.* While in the U.S. context this recommendation may raise important field-management concerns about the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (which has proven unable to rein in its field managers and deliver many of its functions with consistency), the principle nonetheless remains a powerful one. Whenever possible, field managers should be encouraged to work in tandem with local communities to deliver the various components of the immigration function in a manner that is sensitive to and builds upon the particular circumstances of an area.

Currently, hardly any border communities have either a strategy or a mechanism for building their capacity to aggregate and articulate their interests. Developing such strategies and investing in mechanisms—such as a regular annual or biennial meeting of public and private-sector interests along and across a single border—could address this weakness. (Some U.S.-Canada border interests are served by a number of useful fora, but more needs to be done, particularly in terms of inclusiveness—see Meyers and Papademetriou, this volume.) Such a regular forum would institutionalize the exchange of views, facilitate the process of learning about each other’s interests, priorities, successes, and failures, and offer an opportunity to build relationships and impanel issue-focused groups, as appropriate, to promote common interests. Central governments also should initiate regular, systematic

opportunities for local interests to be brought into the decision-making process about issues that affect them. Such an initiative would address a second systemic weakness of the status quo—the lack of a formal mechanism for communities to convey their interests to the appropriate central government policy-making bodies in a manner that is timely and thus enhances the prospects of a fair hearing.²

Such courses of action will not solve all of the problems identified in this volume. They do hold substantial promise, however, to improve upon two central attributes of the status quo: the failure of border communities to organize themselves in ways that allow them to learn from each other's experiences, and their lack of success in narrowing the pronounced democratic deficits that national border policies have created and perpetuate.

3. *There should not be a one-size-fits-all approach to the issues at hand—not even along a single border.* History, topography, economy, and the level of local engagement with the issue (both that of the public sector and that of the for-profit and not-for-profit private sectors), lead to enormous variability in the delivery of border inspection functions, as do differences in outlooks and management and personal skills of the local managers of national bureaucracies. For instance, the history of Germany's eastern border is quite different from that of the U.S. southwest border, even though both resulted from wars. The German eastern border is only about half a century old, and has been contested, shaped, and drawn and redrawn many times over the centuries; the U.S. southwest border, on the other hand, has been stable for about a century and a half, and the U.S.-Canada border was created through negotiations about two centuries ago.

It is the condition of the bilateral relationship and each state's strategic objectives that are most dominant in how a government will see its border. Germany's appreciation of the long-term value of the markets of its eastern neighbors inclines its policies toward working with them on all issues, as the day fast approaches when these countries will become its full partners within the EU. In addition, Germany's experience with its own divided past makes it almost inconceivable that it would erect fortifications. The United States, on the other hand, is only now beginning to think in terms of a partnership model regarding Mexico—although its view of Canada probably approximates Germany's view of its eastern contiguous neighbors.

But even along a single border, differences demand border management approaches that use more of a surgeon's scalpel than a butcher's meat-cleaver. Until relatively recently, California's view of the border, or for that matter of Mexico, was dramatically different from that of Texas, whose enormous two-way trade relationship and large Mexican-American community dictated a more measured rhetoric and policies. And the U.S.-Canada border is anything but a single entity—in cross-border relationships, in community engagement, in the opportunities and limitations created or imposed by topography (see Meyers and Papademetriou, this volume), and so forth. These differences demand, and sometimes in fact result in, sensitive and thoughtful approaches that respect and take advantage of differences. These approaches, however, still need to be informed by a single policy frame of reference and reflect the levels of shared goals and objectives between the two countries—that is, building upon, rather than undermining, the increasingly seamless cooperation between the two countries in a vast array of policy areas.

The importance of policy clarity and, more importantly, of policies that have a real purpose—an end-goal or a vision—cannot be overemphasized, nor can its absence, from virtually every border this project has studied, be more pronounced. (Germany has been the principal exception.) It is, in our view, the most fundamental explanation for the relative state of confusion about the management of borders, and for the inconsistency with which it is proceeding. As a result of this failure of imagination, states do not seem able to learn from and successfully incorporate innovations in managing borders, using different management models and alternative methodologies.

To summarize, both U.S. and most other borders studied in this project are undergoing enormous—and extremely fast-paced—social and economic transformations. In light of those transformations, the public sector in the capital city may be the least well-prepared entity effectively to shape and manage such changes. Among the reasons for this are the national capitals' frequent locations far away from the borders, and the national governments' tendency to think about issues, and set priorities, in ways that often militate against giving localities the space and flexibility they need to set and pursue their own priorities within the overall framework of national objectives.

The Concept and Vision of North American Integration

We understand integration in the Churchillian sense of a “living organism”—always in need of nourishment and tending, of active support, and of management of its growth and progress. (Conversely, inattention, or the “wrong kind” of attention, can stunt its growth and even lead to its demise.) It is in this conceptual framework that we call on the three NAFTA partners to commence initially domestic processes that will test the idea that a North American Integration “Project” is worth pursuing, and to develop a strategic plan for changing the terms of the debate about the border relationship with their immediate neighbors. If the decision is to proceed, bilateral negotiations should be pursued with an aim of agreeing on the kind of border relationship each pair of countries wishes to see by an arbitrarily set target date (say, 2015 or 2020).

Whatever is agreed to must proceed from the assumption that if these negotiations are to succeed, they must recommend activities that are gradual and evolutionary, and in each instance take into account the interests of the affected communities. This implies much deeper levels of national government, state (provincial), and local government cooperation. It also implies far greater and more systematic consultations with local stakeholders than any of the three national governments is either familiar with or perhaps comfortable in undertaking.

What we envision here is a set of processes that asks the question, does sufficient support either exist or can it be generated for a bold vision of a North American “Project”? Such a vision imagines the NAFTA’s internal borders gradually (and in temporal and substantive terms, unevenly) becoming irrelevant to the point at which their abolition could proceed without any measurable losses in any of the important security, revenue collection, and even “identity” priorities of each partner, at least relative to the results of the present course of action. The vision also imagines small actual additional losses in “sovereignty” for any of the partners that would be offset by substantial democratic surpluses for all three NAFTA countries.

Such a vision could be best approached from two distinct, yet ultimately converging, tracks. The first focuses on continuing the multiplicity of contacts, the deepening of bilateral engagement, and, in some instances, the focus on pragmatic problem-solving that has been the operational model for the past few years. While this track has at times produced an almost mindless continuity (simply doing more of the same but somehow expecting much better results), at other times it has led to occasional progress toward the often competing goals of each pair of partners.

The second track should focus on the kind of North America the citizens of the three countries have a legitimate right to expect in the not-too-distant future—and on how best to achieve it. Some of this track's required elements will of necessity be "defensive" in nature; that is, they must "protect" citizens from unwanted activities, practices, and products. Other elements will be forward-looking and will be advancing broader citizen interests in terms of prosperity, adherence to rules, protection of rights, and fundamental conformity with the principles of humanitarianism. In its totality, the proposed vision should hold the promise for doing better by most people in each of the NAFTA partners along most of these goals.

Such a vision should include the following among its main elements: (a) greater security from illegal activities and unwanted products from *outside* the NAFTA space—including terrorism, illegal immigration, drugs, and more; (b) protection from illegal activities and undesirable products that may be found *inside* the NAFTA region that will be no less reliable than what each NAFTA partner enjoys now; (c) the nearly seamless movement of legitimate goods and people seeking to cross internal NAFTA borders; and (d) protection from the political ups and downs (the political "mood swings," as it were) of one NAFTA partner or another and, perhaps more importantly, from bureaucratic "ad-hocism," affecting the vital interests of the other partners. Of course, such protection would be best guaranteed by some institutional mechanisms, especially "dispute resolution" measures similar to those developed for the NAFTA.

There is nothing in our vision that interferes with building greater prosperity within the border region. In fact, we anticipate greater intraregional economic growth, both as a result of gains in the international competitive position of the NAFTA region's products and services,

and from greater freedom and democracy for the people of the region. We, of course, are convinced that these latter gains will be much more robust if border communities are encouraged to reach their own levels of integration—both along and across intra-NAFTA borders.

Is our vision realistic? We think so. Will critics think that it is realistic? Probably not. In many ways, there are few things easier than shooting down a vision. The three NAFTA capitals are full of people who know how to say “no” a million ways. (Bureaucracies of all types are particularly adept at saying “no” to changes in their mission or culture. Ultimately, since it is bureaucracies that will implement any vision, working with them will bear more fruit than working against them.) Getting to “yes,” however, requires great political courage and uncommon qualities of leadership. Nor can a vision of a different future immediately provide fully satisfactory answers to all the questions—legitimate or not—that people may pose. Fears, hopes, self-interest, competing institutional mandates and priorities, different senses of self, diverging Weltanschauungen (worldviews), and a whole host of nuances and different perspectives guarantee that the road to realizing the vision proposed here will be rocky and that the outcome frequently will seem uncertain. Furthermore, as with the early stages of any ambitious new initiative, there will be winners and losers—and each NAFTA partner will have to give priority to developing policies that address the concerns of those who will likely lose at the beginning.

Preliminary Steps to Pursuing the North American Integration “Project”

Further integration of North America will not occur overnight. Integration, Wirth’s building of “community” (1996), is a gradual process involving a myriad of incremental steps and the building of trust. To begin, we suggest that each border inspection agency be required to analyze each one of the functions it performs at the border along three lines: First, must each of its functions be done only at the border? Second, what are the costs and benefits of doing that function at the border versus doing it elsewhere? Third, can any of its functions be per-

formed by an inspector from a sister agency? (An advisory citizens' panel could review each agency's report for responsiveness to the mandate.)

The following might be among some of the issues to be examined:

- What if the Customs Service re-deployed its resources to perform many of its inspections and collect all applicable duties at the point where the cargo is loaded in North America, and employed available technology to seal the container(s) and transfer all the relevant information about the cargo electronically to any other inspection point?
- What if Customs were then to employ a "risk-management" methodology for performing its inspection functions and in return re-deployed some of its newly "released" personnel to joint investigative task forces with agencies from either side of the border in order to uncover violations of various types?
- What if all inspections and the collection of tariffs, for all of the NAFTA partners, were done either by one partner on behalf of the others or jointly—but always once—at the initial point in which a cargo from a non-NAFTA country enters NAFTA space? And in this context, why not explore the concept of "unified port management" for its potential to use resources most efficiently while improving both services and the quality of inspections?
- What if the remaining border customs inspections also were done once—by either national customs service—so as to accommodate variances in staffing, physical infrastructure, and topographical idiosyncrasies? (Isolated instances of "sharing" are already in place, but they have proven to be politically very difficult.)
- What if the United States were to copy the Canadian model of having only one agency staff the primary inspection lanes, rather than having both Customs and the Immigration and Naturalization Service, as presently occurs? All necessary

inspection agencies would retain a presence at the border to perform secondary inspections, but after appropriate training and negotiation this might simplify some of the existing staffing and personnel issues.

- What if the existing systems of customs brokers and private bondsmen were utilized to an even greater extent and were given both greater power and greater responsibility—and, by extension, were made more accountable (and penalized more severely) for failures of either omission or commission? And what if it were thus the private sector that grew to accommodate the growth in commerce, rather than the public sector agencies whose growth depends so very much on the budgetary and policy priorities of the national government at any given point in time?
- What if the private sector were to be relied upon even more consequentially in areas ranging from technology to the building of better infrastructure wherever it might be needed, through liberalized public-private partnerships and pay-as-you-go projects?
- What if the Immigration Service were to move in the same direction as Customs, that is, if it did all third-country (non-NAFTA) immigration controls at an individual's first point of entry into NAFTA space? Pre-clearance technology and intelligence cooperation are in many instances already significant enough to expect that this method can be accelerated without any loss of control relative to the status quo. In fact, airport inspections are more accurate and can be more efficient than virtually any system of inspections at land borders, where visa and identity checks are rather perfunctory.
- What if Canada and the United States initially were to agree to a common visa regime for the widest band of countries each country could accommodate, and exercised much greater care in the issuance of visas for the citizens of countries for which visa-free entry could not be agreed to by the other country?

- What if Canada and the United States initially, the U.S. and Mexico at a later point, and, eventually, all three NAFTA partners and contiguous neighbors, agreed to gradually liberalize the movement of each other's nationals? Considering the special treatment that each has offered to the other's professionals, businesspersons, and investors, for example under the NAFTA, and in view of the extraordinary—and increasing—degree to which the two pairs of economies and their associated labor markets are integrated, formalizing the greater movement of people may be a relatively small step to take. In fact, as the U.S.-Mexico Migration Panel report (2001) referred to earlier points out, the U.S. labor market can probably absorb effectively greater numbers of legal workers from both of its NAFTA partners. (Much better controls on unauthorized entries and employment would be an extra incentive for greater openness in legal visas.) It might be instructive to note in this regard that despite having reached absolute freedom of movement, intra-EU migration by EU citizens is minuscule, at between seven and eight million persons, or about two percent of the EU's population. Concerns about the potential exploitation by the nationals of one country of another country's more generous social support systems can be addressed in a variety of ways, including the EU's method of a foreigner continuing to be protected by the social protection mechanisms of the country of origin for the first three months after "relocation." A migrant can also be required to leave the country to which he or she has moved unless (s)he has found a job within a specified period of time or has his or her own means of support.

These recommendations are not made in a vacuum. Some tentative steps toward the directions recommended here are already being taken, the technology is readily available, and the large business sector that accounts for most of the transborder initiatives and energy is thought to be fully primed for cooperating in return for more timely and predictable results. A vision, and political will, seem to be the major missing ingredients.

Comparisons of Our North American Vision with the European Integration “Project”

The repeated references to the EU beg the question of how closely our vision for a North American “Project” relates to Europe’s own integration project. The answer is that, in the matters most important for North Americans, the differences between the two concepts may be greater than their similarities. Three differences may be most consequential.

First, because of the degree of integration that is likely to have been reached prior to achieving the vision promulgated here, and the United States’ strong distaste for supranational bureaucracies, we see no place for a “Brussels” in North America. Although we do not claim that the sovereignty of each partner will not be somewhat diluted, our model does not envision the direct transfers of sovereignty so central to the EU concept.

Second, our conception has a strong bias toward an integration process that is organic and is thus built from the bottom up—and from the periphery to the center, that is, from border regions to capital cities. Although the final push must still come from the top down—if for no other reason than that this is how national bureaucracies become energized—our model differs dramatically from the top-down approach the EU practices even today. It is these fundamental differences in the source and location of the energy for integration that are responsible for the EU’s enormous democratic deficits—unlike what we believe to be the significant democratic surpluses of our approach.

Finally, unlike with the EU, there is nothing in our concept that envisions the creation of a new political entity. Nor is there any expectation of untoward rates of change in areas each of the three NAFTA partners considers nearly “sacred”—such as issues of national identity or specific components of a model of public governance, or Canada’s attachment to (an eroding) system of social protections. After all, even in the absence of an EU-like Social Charter or an outright emulation of the relative largesse of Canadian social benefits, the defense of individual freedom, the promotion of social rights, the commitment to democratic pluralism, and the importance of civil society are domi-

nant values in both the United States and Canada—and Mexico is clearly moving toward them.

Outline of the Volume

The essays on the individual regions that were studied in this project begin with a section on North American borders, involving three areas along the U.S.-Canada border and four along the U.S.-Mexico border. In the former, Meyers and Papademetriou discuss the three regions they studied (Buffalo/Niagara, Detroit/Windsor, and Seattle/Vancouver), describe the myriad of cross-border ties and cooperative initiatives they discovered in their research visits, and highlight some of the “best practices” they culled from both the public and private sectors. They found that the border relationship is greatly shaped by the degree of shared cross-border interests, the levels of informal and interpersonal relationships between the principal actors, the presence and degree of engagement of stakeholders and networks—especially those of business—and the national political skills of local and federal officials.

Meyers and Papademetriou also catalogue and discuss the many opportunities and challenges faced by communities along the U.S.-Canada border. For example, many border community residents take advantage of dining, entertainment, and shopping in the other country, while businesses use their locational advantages to appeal to and serve a binational clientele. Among the many challenges are delays in crossing the border and their effect on peoples’ schedules, business productivity, pollution (which is heavily linked to crossing delays), and mostly petty illegal activity. Overall, the authors’ respondents had a positive image of the border, although the role of the federal government (in terms of staffing, infrastructure, and policy issues) was identified as a repeated frustration. The most common refrain of their interviews seemed to be the need for a much better balance of facilitation of legitimate crossings with prevention of illegal ones.

Meyers and Papademetriou conclude that the communities’ differences in levels of social and economic integration, geography, types of crossing points, and population compositions are substantial enough

that “one size doesn’t fit all” when it comes to crafting a policy for this border. Instead, a framework that incorporates a national policy—yet allows local flexibility—and thus takes each area’s commonalities and differences into account, would be a more appropriate approach. They argue for greater vertical and horizontal consciousness raising to help mitigate the challenges border communities face, and suggest a two-track approach to problem solving. The first would focus on technical improvements and building further on existing discussions; the second would be more conceptual, challenging the conventional wisdom by stepping back to think more broadly about the goals of border policies and the best ways to achieve them. They recommend greater and more systematic input by local communities and businesses into both tracks.

Moving south, Rodriguez and Hagan focus on the variety of formal and informal local practices that transborder communities have created along the Texas-Mexico border, often despite national regulations. After profiling Laredo/Nuevo Laredo and El Paso/Ciudad Juárez and providing a better understanding of their histories and present-day interactions, they catalogue by sector the “best practices” they discovered. These include cooperation in local government, law enforcement, business, public health, education, and community grassroots. Rodriguez and Hagan note that strong social, cultural, and economic ties have evolved in these four cities which straddle the border, and that local cooperation between individuals is the key to successful initiatives. They conclude that cooperation between these communities may be predisposed to occur, however, because of their integrated economies, historical ties (social, cultural, and familial), common concerns over health and the environment, and the sense that they share a common destiny despite obvious economic asymmetries.

Del Castillo’s study of the region further west along the U.S.-Mexico border draws a relatively pessimistic portrait of the border landscape. He finds few stable cross-border institutional, corporate, or community ties along either the California-Mexico or the Arizona-Mexico borders. He attributes this, in part, to the extraordinary pace of economic growth in, and asymmetries between, these particular regions. According to del Castillo, the “understandings” that are reached in these regions often are short-lived. Combined with an increasing and constantly changing number of private actors (often acting as public

sector substitutes), cross-border mistrust, and poor-quality governance in the region, cross-border interactions and initiatives are understandably both episodic and limited.

For del Castillo, the two countries' different political and judicial systems exacerbate the problems, as does the fact that as problems remain unaddressed they increase in complexity until their resolution becomes both more difficult and more costly. He urges the development of a unified vision for the region and the formation of "rapid response structures" to address short- and medium-term problems. Such structures could mediate among the multitude of actors and institutions, perhaps even serving as a clearinghouse for binational planning on such issues as population growth, access to natural resources, environmental degradation, and industrial growth.

The reader will notice certain striking differences in the findings between Rodriguez/Hagan and del Castillo along the same national border, not only in the extent and nature of cross-border interactions, but also in attitudes. This is exemplified by the quote of a Mexican official referring to the two Laredos as a single city compared to a San Diego decision maker's comment of "no existe" when asked about transborder understandings. Perhaps the common origins and apparently common economic destinies of the two Laredos and the El Paso/Ciudad Juárez region may be responsible to a large degree for the Rodriguez/Hagan findings—in addition to continuing linguistic ties and deep familial and cultural ties, which translate into most "Americans" having family on the "Mexican" side.

The El Paso/Ciudad Juárez topography and the understanding that their survival and their prosperity are inextricably linked may also have contributed to efforts to develop successful coping strategies. Further, it contributes to the sense that each city has more in common with the other than with others in their respective states or countries, as well as to a feeling that dealing with the federal government is a burden—perhaps even an impediment to carrying on their daily lives. The links are additionally strengthened through numerous joint efforts—ranging from the role of both cities' business communities in the establishment of a Dedicated Commuter Lane at the border crossing to the creation by the sister cities' local governments of a joint urban growth plan and their sharing of medical information and equipment.

By comparison, San Diego is a much larger city, located 12 miles

away from the border (San Ysidro is actually Tijuana's neighboring city.) Rapid population growth in both cities has stressed the local infrastructure tremendously, while sharp differences in the ethnic composition of the populations of these two cities reinforce their separation. Though family and business ties clearly exist, they are not nearly as many and not nearly as deep as those in Texas. Nor are the economies of Tijuana and San Diego as closely interdependent as they are in Texas. The absence of joint planning and information sharing in Tijuana-San Diego typically means that initiatives often become overrun by events, while the contrast between "hardened" border enforcement and the continuous expansion of trade and economic ties seem to have had a larger and more negative impact on the populations and relationships in California (and somewhat less so, Arizona) than in Texas.

Witt provides the transition to the volume's second section, on European borders. She offers a thoughtful comparison of issues along the United States-Mexico border with those of the European Union (EU), noting that the EU has a distinctly top-down approach to integration that includes an endless array of institutions and substantial amounts of financing to support them and their initiatives. Witt believes that North America could learn from certain aspects of the European experience and suggests incorporating border regions into the policy process for decisions that affect them and creating funding and institutional structures to support cooperation on security and non-security issues.

Witt speculates that while the NAFTA has raised expectations in the Arizona-Sonora border region which remain unmet, informal cooperation is thriving, in contrast to the German-Polish border, where communities and authorities seem to be lagging in terms of informal cooperation. Witt reports that many border communities in the Arizona-Sonora region view federal policies as a barrier to cooperation or as the cause of particular problems, and want increased representation in the decision-making process in ways that will enhance the federal authorities' understanding of the border, its culture, and the local perspective. For instance, an overly intense focus on border controls and enforcement may be harming the border economy and the building of trust between communities. Witt believes, nonetheless, that border functions remain important for sovereignty and security, and points out that the EU has transformed them into instruments of integration and solidarity rather than barriers.

The European section continues with Irek's detailed study of the border between Germany and Poland, a border rich in informal contacts despite its history of conflict. She details many of the local initiatives that have grown along the German-Polish border, including the self-declaration by two neighboring towns as one *Europastadt*, Internet links between town halls, joint bus lines to facilitate cross-border shopping, a border university, and binational business ventures. Irek suggests that the success of these efforts may be attributable to such factors as the urgency of problems, the degree of economic necessity, the common sense of local authorities, the good will of inhabitants, and the international political climate. In addition, she notes that two of the towns studied used to be one until the penultimate redivision of the borders. In addition, their multiethnic populations and the signing of an international treaty of friendship by the respective national governments have paved the way and provided some funding for local initiatives.

Irek acknowledges that many people are profiting from the current open nature of the border. She observes that common sense and flexibility are required when national governments deal with border communities and that the former are too far from the border to really either understand the situation or improve it—although they certainly can hinder cooperation. She recommends that local communities in border areas be granted additional autonomy in addressing some of the local, border-related challenges.

The third section of this volume focuses on a part of the world noted for its newly opened and newly created borders, the Russia-China and Russia-Kazakhstan borders, respectively. Larin and Rubtsova report on regions along the Russia-China border, which has little history of cross-border interactions due to the Soviet era's closed borders. They note the large asymmetries in population and the primarily one-way flow of people from China to Russia. The traffic is composed largely of shuttle traders, and many residents of that region feel that the Russian government does not appreciate the importance of this trade to the Russian Far East population, as evidenced by restrictive legislation.

Clearly, an atmosphere where only one country sees the border as an economic opportunity is not an atmosphere conducive to two-way cross-border initiatives. Language and political differences pose further obstacles to cross-border initiatives, although Larin and Rubtsova

do detail some successful initiatives achieved by local authorities exhibiting some flexibility (such as the 24-hour Chinese market) and describe the generally appreciative attitude of local Russians toward the Chinese who bring many needed goods. They conclude, however, that at present the border is being managed ineffectively, it is challenged by poor infrastructure, extensive corruption, and crime, and it lacks a means to collect and disseminate accurate information about the actual numbers of Chinese migrant entries—data that, in the authors' view, might counter prejudices and security concerns.

Kosach, Kuzmin, and Mukomel conclude this section with their discussion of various crossing points along the Russia-Kazakhstan border. Shedding light on a little-known area, they describe a border that is only ten years old and noteworthy for its limited contact between cross-border communities. In some ways, the border communities the authors studied could not be more different from the communities along the North American and European borders. The authors attribute this to the lack of shared interests, poor transportation and other physical infrastructure, and a paucity of cultural or economic connections. Exceptions include substantial economic cooperation in raw materials in the Orenburg region and cooperation in hydrocarbon production in the Astrakahn region. Moreover, Kazakh citizens regularly use medical and educational cross-border facilities in Russia and some business ties also exist, although they tend to be unstable. By and large, however, the authors describe a region rife with interethnic tensions and territorial disputes, trafficking of drugs and weapons, and substantial crime and corruption.

The contrasts between the two Russian borders studied in this section of the volume are very significant. One is forced to speculate that the far greater cross-border connection between Russia and China is largely the result of business and tourist contacts along the Russia-China border, the greater economic dependence of Russians in the Far East on the Chinese petty traders, and on the business acumen of the Chinese.

Although the section on Russian borders concludes the volume, the appendix provides an opportunity to learn from yet another experience, that of the evolution of the European Union. Schmidt and Salt provide a brief retrospective on European integration, summarizing the EU's steps toward the free movement of people since its inception and discussing the obstacles in continental integration the European

project has had to overcome—obstacles that at the time had seemed insurmountable. In particular, the appendix traces the fifty-year incremental process that made free movement a reality, and the evolution of Europe’s regional policies. The appendix also serves as a reminder that the free movement of people in the European Union grew as much from a political as from an economic rationale—a reminder that is useful as the United States and Mexico embark on their conversations on the bilateral migration and border relationship. The appendix thus encourages states to manage their borders jointly and reminds the reader that progress on even the most intractable issues may come down to creativity, leadership, local input, an overarching vision, common sense, and a willingness to experiment and learn from others.

Concluding Thoughts

Few issues in the international system are as complex as those surrounding borders. As this volume demonstrates, the roots of that complexity include but go beyond the reality that borders are the most direct physical manifestation of “statehood” and sovereignty—of the continuously evolving Weberian notion of the ability to exercise (near-) monopoly control over entry (and by extension, membership). They also are inextricably linked with competing policy priorities that simultaneously expect border inspection systems to allow the swift and efficient passage of legitimate people and products while unerringly stopping illegitimate traffic and undesirable products. The research conducted for this project has spotlighted another, and typically forgotten or ignored, facet of borders: as concepts which in their practical manifestation divide communities, exacerbate differences in approach between localities and national governments, and interfere with the ability of public and private sector “on-the-ground” actors to pursue their own paths toward ever greater integration.

At their very root, however, borders and their “management” or “protection,” however much these last functions may have changed in recent years, are first and foremost *political* concepts, and can only be addressed politically. Hence this project’s search for a vision that

might maximize the benefits while containing the undesirable elements of the extraordinary—and increasing—economic, social, and cultural exchanges among the peoples of the NAFTA region.

Returning to the “North American” partnership—this project’s region of direct interest—what have the years since the NAFTA came into force (1994) meant for the relationships that have been the focus of this volume? At the national level, Mexico has seen gains in what it has chosen to emphasize as its own top priorities: protecting the human rights and dignity of its nationals and inoculating the rest of the bilateral relationship against the infectious potential of disagreements about immigration and drugs. Canada has been largely insulated from America’s often wild and unpredictable tilting at the windmills of illegal immigration, drug trafficking, and more recently, foreign terrorism—although not without a great deal of effort and skilled diplomacy. Canada’s ultimately successful effort in 2000 to reverse the entry/exit control provisions of a 1996 U.S. law that was universally thought of as a clear threat to the economic relationship of the United States with both Canada and Mexico will become a classic case-study of successfully navigating between the American equivalents of the proverbial Scylla of U.S. domestic politics and the Charybdis of improper interference in U.S. affairs. In engineering and quarterbacking (even if through various surrogates) the reversal of Section 110 of that act,³ Canada protected its economic interests with extreme efficiency. The United States managed regularly to impose its will on an at times passive Zedillo administration on an array of law-and-order issues relating to the border (such as illegal immigration, drug trafficking, the return of criminal aliens, and so forth). Simultaneously, the United States worked closely and, in all but a handful of instances, effectively, with Canada to address issues of common concern in what is by now in many ways a seamless process of bilateral cooperation across a remarkable number of potentially contentious issues.

Considering these facts, and in view of the unfolding of a more organic and equitable U.S.-Mexico relationship between the Fox and Bush administrations, what relationships might one anticipate within the NAFTA-space in the years ahead?

Canada’s understandable preoccupation with its U.S. relationship will continue to motivate that country to ensure by any means neces-

sary that the economic relationship continues to grow in ways that guarantee the prosperity of its people. This does not preclude the periodic flare-up of any of the by now typical disagreements over fishing, softwoods, or other issues, but it does “pre-determine” their outcomes. It is in fact our contention that, substantively at least, the U.S.-Canada border is likely to disappear before any politician finds the political courage to negotiate its removal. Symbolic issues, of course, will need to be addressed, as will the significant strengthening of police functions both along the outside perimeter of North America and—an important policy development—in the interior of each country, an intensification that is already occurring.

Mexico, buoyed by and ready to draw on the democratic dividend created by Mr. Fox’s defeat of the candidate of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in the 2000 presidential elections, has found the confidence to enter into bilateral negotiations with the United States about a tough binational “bargain” on migration and border issues. That bargain, if finalized, would offer Mexicans much greater access to the part of the U.S. economy and labor markets in which it is already a major player—in combinations of Americans of Mexican descent and Mexican legal and unauthorized immigrants—in return for far greater and much more active cooperation in addressing the primarily “law-and-order” issues of concern to the United States. (These focus mainly on organized criminal networks of every type.) Mexico’s ability to deliver on the responsibilities it would undertake under such a bargain would in turn determine the pace at which it may begin to catch up with the U.S. treatment of the U.S.-Canada border.

Finally, and from a decidedly U.S.-centric perspective, where might the United States come out in all of this? U.S. interest in the North American “project” envisioned here (“acceptance” may be a more appropriate term than “interest”) is likely to be tepid until it is convinced that it can accomplish its own policy priorities less expensively, more efficiently, and much more effectively than under the status quo. The negotiations with the “new” Mexico, if concluded successfully and implemented with determination, will have taken the United States further along in that “project” than it is initially likely to appreciate. And in getting there from here, the greatest obstacles are still likely to be drug and immigration issues, rather than those of customs or even “terrorism.” In that regard, it is the limits of thicker and infinitely

more expensive controls—and their obvious ineffectiveness and such perverse side effects as large numbers of border-crosser deaths—that may persuade the United States to consider truly alternative ways of dealing with these first two issues.

It is our view that the U.S.-Canada and U.S.-Mexico borders and associated relationships are slowly moving along paths that are likely to bring a gradual change in the terms of the North American debate in the years ahead. If that becomes the case, the three NAFTA partners are likely to enjoy many more of the fruits that greater North American integration can offer for border communities and, more generally, for most of the citizens of the three partnering countries. Will we prove equal to the larger task? That is a question whose answer lies in the future. Without basic changes in our thinking, however, it is an answer that we may never reach.

Notes

1. Each president defeated the party that was in power when that paradigm was established.
2. In both areas, the EU is far ahead of the pack, having organized and funded an “assembly” of representatives of border areas and having granted it an institutionalized advisory role to the EU Commission and European Parliament. (See Schmidt and Salt, as well as Witt, this volume.)
3. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) (Public Law 104-208; 110 Stat. 3009-1820).

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