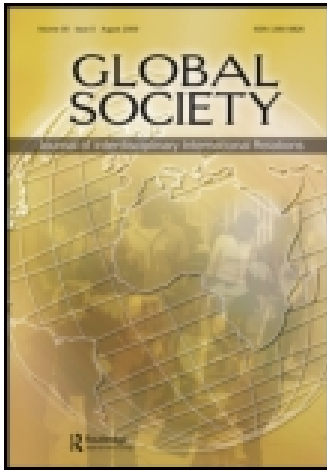


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The Cross-Border Metropolis in a Global Age: A Conceptual Model and Empirical Evidence from the US–Mexico and European Border Regions

LAWRENCE A. HERZOG and CHRISTOPHE SOHN

In a globalising urban world, cross-border metropolises are important spatial configurations that reflect the interplay between the space of flows and the space of places. This article scrutinises the different logics at play as urbanisation occurs around international boundaries. It disentangles the contradictory “bordering dynamics” that shape cross-border urban spaces in the context of globalisation and territorial restructuring. Because national borders embody multifaceted as well as ambivalent roles and meanings, they can be viewed as critical barometers for understanding how globalisation impacts cross-border metropolitan space. The first two sections of the article explore the two globalisation processes—“debordering” and “rebordering”—that define the formation of cross-border metropolises. We view the border as a social and political construction; as such, we propose a conceptual framework that addresses the changing role and significance of boundaries in the making of cross-border metropolises. Finally, we offer two contrasting empirical case studies, one from the US–Mexico border, the other from a European border region. By studying bordering dynamics in San Diego–Tijuana and Geneva, we are able to draw some conclusions about the challenges faced by cross-border metropolitan spaces as well as some mechanisms that will govern their future organisation.

Introduction

Globalisation in the twenty first century is leading to new forms of spatial relations, including the emerging prototype of the “global city.”¹ The gradual acceleration of transnational banking, offshore manufacturing, multination trade blocs, global communications, digital technology and the international division of labour have all shaped a profound “internationalisation” of urban space. No longer are cities merely artefacts shaped by local stakeholders; urban centres have become containers increasingly developed and transformed by international actors, from corporate investors and transnational financial interests to transborder marketing entities and cross-national governmental organisations. To accommodate the forces of globalisation, the city has been forced to reinvent itself; sprawling “edge cities” and dense,

1. Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

high-tech corporate business districts are just two recent responses to the globalisation of the metropolis.

Globalisation has also shifted urban populations towards international boundaries, leading to the need for a discourse on these new globalising urban spaces, or what one might term "transfrontier metropolises."² Following the rise of the nation-state in the nineteenth century, cities usually evolved in locations entirely inside (and often distant from) the boundaries of sovereign nations. Yet during the late twentieth century, this pattern began to loosen in some regions across the planet, as population, economic resources and infrastructure migrated towards the edges of nations, leading to the formation of city regions that sprawl across international boundaries, notably in Europe and North America.³

The evolution of transfrontier metropolitan regions remains a very recent phenomenon if one looks at the historic relationship between cities and territorial boundaries. Historically, the location and growth of cities has been controlled and managed by nation-states. Territorial politics in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries dictated that nations guard their borders. This "shelter" mentality fostered a common pattern of settlement in which the largest urban concentrations tended to be located away from the physical edges of a nation.⁴ Before 1950, in fact, border regions were viewed as buffer zones that helped to protect the nation from invasion by land. Under these conditions, there were few significant cities near national boundaries. A glance at the map of Western Europe corroborates this: Paris, Madrid, Rome and Frankfurt all lie in the interior of their respective countries. Across the Atlantic in the Americas, we see a similar pattern: Mexico City, Lima, São Paulo or Bogota are all a considerable distance from the nearest international boundary. Only in the second half of the last century does one begin to see cases where border territory evolves into prime real estate for settlement and city building. The age of land warfare across much of the planet is over, although there are, of course, conflict zones that remain. Meanwhile, global markets and free trade are the new dominant realities. We have entered a new global age where property at the edges of nations can attract investors, businesses and governments. Industrial parks, highways, rail systems and airports that once bypassed international frontiers are relocating there. It is now possible for large cities to be developed along international frontiers.

In this article, we conceive cross-border metropolises as urban configurations that can potentially benefit from the interplay between the flows of globalisation (space of flows) and the proximity of territorial borders (space of places). We recognise that open borders offer opportunities for cross-border metropolises to reinforce their position at the heart of global economic networks and to affirm

2. Lawrence A. Herzog, "Cross-National Urban Structure in the Era of Global Cities: The US–Mexico Transfrontier Metropolis", *Urban Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (1991), pp. 519–533.

3. Important European transfrontier urban agglomerations, with populations ranging from several hundred thousand to more than one million are found along the Swiss–French–German border, the Dutch–German–Belgian border, in metropolitan Geneva on the Swiss–French border and in metropolitan Strasbourg on the French–German border. In North America, one finds transfrontier urban regions of between half a million and five million people along the Canada–US border and along the Mexico–US border at Tijuana–San Diego, Ciudad Juarez–El Paso and other urbanised zones.

4. See also Lawrence A. Herzog, *Where North Meets South* (Austin, TX: CMAS/University of Texas Press, 1990), pp. 2–4, 13–17.

their autonomy as cross-border regional entities.⁵ Yet the process of what we term “debordering,” which allowed cross-border metropolises to mobilise the border as a resource, has been countered by what we call “rebordering” trends, notably via the post-9/11 securitisation discourse. If both debordering and rebordering are seen as emerging processes embedded in the globalisation of space,⁶ their combined impact on cross-border metropolises calls for further investigation. How do these contradictory dynamics (re)structure the social, economic and political relations that shape cross-border metropolitan spaces? To what extent does rebordering challenge the future of cross-border metropolises? How can we conceptualise the debordering vs. rebordering dynamic for cross-border conurbations?

With these research questions in mind, the aim of this article is to investigate the ways in which cross-border metropolises are affected by contradictory dynamics. Because borders conspicuously embody multifaceted as well as ambivalent roles and meanings, they appear to be critical barometers for understanding how globalisation impacts cross-border metropolises. In the first two sections of the article, we explore the two globalisation processes—debordering and rebordering—that participate in the formation of cross-border metropolises. Based on an approach to the border as a social and political construction, we then suggest a conceptual framework that allows for a comprehensive analysis of the changing role and significance of boundaries in the making of cross-border metropolises. Finally, we offer two contrasting empirical case studies, one from the US–Mexico border, the other from a European border. By studying bordering dynamics in San Diego–Tijuana and Geneva, we are able to draw some conclusions about the mechanisms that govern the emergence of cross-border metropolises.

Debordering and the Emergence of Transborder Urban Spaces

Over the last three decades, technological advances in the transport and telecommunication industry, together with the end of the Cold War, the explosion of global markets, the subsequent demise of the Iron Curtain and the emergence of new supra-national political and economic formations such as the European Union and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), all point to a vision of a world with increasingly permeable borders, allowing an ever-broadening range of transnational flows. Such developments—part and parcel of the process of globalisation—have led to the simultaneous emergence of what might be termed deterritorialisation, or debordering, that is, the steady decline in the significance of national territory and borders as key elements for organising social life, economic development and political order. For some proponents of the neoliberal economy, the impact of globalisation on state borders was about the emergence of a deterritorialised and therefore “borderless world.”⁷ Although globalisation has rendered borders more permeable to capital, commodities, information and even

5. Christophe Sohn, “The Border as a Resource in the Global Urban Space: A Contribution to the Cross-Border Metropolis Hypothesis”, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (2013), doi: [10.1111/1468-2427.12071](https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12071).

6. Xiangming Chen, *As Borders Bend: Transnational Spaces on the Pacific Rim* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), p. 13.

7. Kenichi Ohmae, *The Borderless World: Power and Strategy in the Interlinked Economy* (London: Harper-Collins, 1990).

people in some cases, the notion of a world entirely without borders does not seem likely in the foreseeable future.⁸

However, more germane to this article, the opening of territorial borders has unleashed a new era for understanding and conceptualising the changing condition of international borders and the spaces around them. It is now possible to begin to consider how the functions of contact and exchange might, in the future, strike a balance with the traditional functions of boundaries as barriers. In this new paradigm, borders are conceived as interfaces or bridges capable of fostering economic and social development within transborder regions and cities. Empirical explorations for the opening of borders within cross-boundary conurbations and the transformation of cross-border social spaces have emerged, for example, in the transborder urban spaces along the US–Mexico border⁹ and in Europe, especially along the Upper Rhine.¹⁰ For Herzog,¹¹ the emergence of cross-border work and transnational industrialisation (in particular the upsurge of *maquiladoras*, or border assembly plants) generate interdependent social, economic and environmental relationships that underscore the formation of the cross-border metropolis as a specific product of globalisation.

The cross-border metropolis as a socio-spatial paradigm has been challenged by some scholars. They question whether social and economic entities on either side of a state border can ultimately become part of a unified cross-boundary urban space, as opposed to two separate albeit interconnected entities. Despite the evidence of cross-border connections between Tijuana and San Diego, Alegría rejects the hypothesis of a cross-border metropolis, arguing that there is still not sufficient convergence between the two urban entities.¹² Robust cross-border interactions do not necessarily lead to a reduction in differences between the two sides of a shared border. Indeed, Decoville et al. demonstrate that strong cross-border economic interaction can also be fed by core–periphery settings and contribute to the reinforcement of socio-economic differentials.¹³

Moving beyond these seemingly contradictory perspectives, Sohn has developed a conceptual framework that highlights the different ways in which open borders offer opportunities to cross-border metropolises to reinforce their place in global economic networks, and thus enhance their autonomy as cross-border regional entities.¹⁴ Firstly, the border is a means of delimiting national sovereignty by creating an “inside” and an “outside” role—a comparative advantage that allows individuals or organisations to be in contact with the exterior of a territory while remaining safely inside it. In so doing, the border thus generates a *positional benefit* that can result either in a role as territorial gateway, or in the delocalisation

8. Henry Wai-Chung Yeung, “Capital, State and Space: Contesting the Borderless World”, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (1998), pp. 291–309.

9. Herzog, *Where North Meets South*, *op. cit.*; Daniel Arreola and William Curtis, *The Mexican Border Cities* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1993).

10. Remigio Ratti and Shalom Reichman, *Theory and Practice of Transborder Cooperation* (Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1993).

11. Herzog, “Cross-National Urban Structure”, *op. cit.*

12. Tito Alegría, *Metrópolis Transfronteriza: Revisión de La Hipótesis y Evidencias de Tijuana, México y San Diego, Estados Unidos* (Tijuana: Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 2009).

13. Antoine Decoville, Frédéric Durand, Christophe Sohn and Olivier Walther, “Comparing Cross-Border Metropolitan Integration in Europe: Towards a Functional Typology”, *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (2013), pp. 221–237.

14. Sohn, *op. cit.*

of certain activities to the other side of the border generating a so-called “hinterlandisation.” Secondly, a border becomes an asset when it promotes the exploitation of cost differentials. For cross-border metropolises, such a *differential benefit* is reflected in particular by transnational industrialisation (e.g. the *maquiladoras*) and the development of cross-border work. Thirdly, the border area allows *hybridisation* by confronting differences and overcoming constraints through socio-cultural or institutional innovation. Finally, a border can become a symbolic resource as an *object of recognition* that authorises the staging of the international character of the metropolis and/or the political recognition of peripheral actors.

Rebordering and the Challenge for Global Security

One must recognise that globalisation has also produced a trend that runs counter to deterritorialisation and debordering; we call this trend rebordering. It is possible to argue that rebordering and debordering are intrinsically complementary.¹⁵ The opening of state borders goes hand in hand with the emergence of new territorialities at infra- as well as supra-national scales. In many regions, reterritorialisation is on the political agenda and new borders are claimed as a response to globalisation and what is sometimes perceived as a loss of cultural as well as identity markers. The de-activation of certain control and filtering measures is thus accompanied by restructuring of bordering practices in other places, on other levels and by different means.¹⁶ In Europe, and to a lesser extent in North America, the loosening of state borders and the subsequent boom in cross-border interactions has encouraged many border cities and regions to engage in active cross-border cooperation, contributing to a rescaling of territorial governance. The formation of cross-border regions, and particularly those equipped with metropolitan functions, can thus be seen as a reterritorialisation of state borders at the cross-border regional scale.

The second perspective on rebordering deals with the securitisation of state borders. Although the potential security threats that borders represent were already a policy concern before 11 September 2001, it has become a defining paradigm for many governments since the terrorist attacks. As a matter of fact, this ideology has had a major impact on the reclosing of territorial borders, particularly along the US frontier¹⁷ and the external borders of the EU.¹⁸ In the name of the “global war on terror,” a sharp increase of controls (at the borders and potentially everywhere) has unfolded, along with the implementation of networked systems of surveillance as well as, in some cases, the erection of walls and security fences. National borders are seen as a line of defence against various threats. Beyond the issue of terrorism, the securitisation discourse also serves to control immigration and reduce the number of migrants from the South entering the North, mainly for economic reasons.¹⁹ Unlike

15. David Newman, “The Lines that Continue to Separate Us: Borders in Our ‘Borderless’ World”, *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (2006), pp. 143–161.

16. Etienne Balibar, “The Borders of Europe”, *Cultural Politics*, Vol. 14 (1998), pp. 216–232.

17. Peter Andreas and Thomas J. Biersteker, *The Rebordering of North America: Integration and Exclusion in a New Security Context* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003).

18. Henk Van Houtum and Roos Pijpers, “The European Union as a Gated Community: The Two-Faced Border and Immigration Regime of the EU”, *Antipode*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (2007), pp. 291–309.

19. David Newman, “Contemporary Research Agendas in Border Studies: An Overview”, in D. Wastl-Walter (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), pp. 33–47.

the first perspective on rebordering, which highlights territorial actors other than the nation-states, this form of rebordering is all about the nation-states. But this process is not only about reclosing borders and retreating back to the nineteenth century. Rather, what is at stake are new forms of filtering/screening of transnational flows, not to stop the movement of people or goods, but to prevent other unwanted elements from entering.²⁰ This selective porosity is meant to protect territorial-bounded nation-states from undesirable global flows.²¹ Balancing economic flows against security imperatives is particularly fragile for the case of the cross-border metropolises, since these two objectives come together and even collide in highly urbanised border zones. On the one hand, cross-border metropolises are places of transnational political, economic and cultural integration. On the other, they are also magnets for immigration, organised crime and other perceived border threats, and therefore hot spots for border securitisation.

In order to disentangle these complex and contradictory dynamics, it is necessary to go beyond the normative views of borders promoted by state actors and accept the idea that it may be possible to couple securitised nationalism and free market transnationalism.²² In other words, we cannot take borders at "face value."²³ Instead, we need to consider the multifaceted impact of borders on the cross-border metropolitan fabric. Borders are no longer passive lines, but active forces and processes impacting a wide array of domestic and international concerns.²⁴ The process of bordering is no longer an exclusive prerogative of the state, but involves a wide range of actors whose interests and meanings need to be considered. In short, the cross-border dynamics of globalisation impact the cross-border metropolises while at the same time being shaped by the people, communities, organisations and other forces that define these urban spaces.

The Border Multiple: A Conceptual Framework

Our argument here is that borders must now be viewed in a dynamic way rather than a static one. Our frame of analysis is one of *bordering*. Bordering is, in the end, a socio-political, cultural and economic process; borders have become social constructions, and thus call for shifting emphasis on the everyday bordering and ordering practices that contribute to their (re)production.²⁵ Following O'Dowd,²⁶ we also believe that such a dynamic understanding of borders should not neglect their structuring effects. Despite the changes imposed on international boundaries, one must also acknowledge the remarkable resilience of national borders. Borders are "dynamic institutions" where functions inherited from state

20. Gabriel Popescu, *Bordering and Ordering the Twenty-First Century: Understanding Borders* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011).

21. Heather Nicol, "Resiliency or Change? The Contemporary Canada-US Border", *Geopolitics*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (2005), pp. 767-790.

22. Matthew B. Sparke, "A Neoliberal Nexus: Economy, Security and the Biopolitics of Citizenship on the Border", *Political Geography*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (2006), p. 153.

23. Nicol, *op. cit.*

24. Alexander C. Diener and Joshua Hagen, "Theorizing Borders in a 'Borderless World': Globalization, Territory and Identity", *Geography Compass*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (2009), pp. 1196-1216.

25. Henk Van Houtum and Ton Van Naerssen, "Bordering, Ordering and Othering", *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*, Vol. 93, No. 2 (2002), pp. 125-136.

26. Liam O'Dowd, "From a 'Borderless World' to a World of Borders: Bringing History Back In", *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 28, No. 6 (2010), pp. 1031-1050.

Table 1. The Significance of the Border: A Conceptual Framework.

Border dynamics	Structuring effects over agency	
	Constraining	Enabling
Debordering	<i>Threat</i>	<i>Resource</i>
Rebordering	<i>Obstacle</i>	<i>Shield</i>

Note: This conceptual framework has been developed by the author in the framework of the EUBORDERSCAPES project. For more details, see <<http://www.euborderscapes.eu/>>.

institutions are contested and reinterpreted through daily activities.²⁷ As such, the meaning attached to borders and bordering practices is highly contextual and emerges from contested and contradictory narratives held at different levels of social action (from the local to the national to the supranational).

Inspired by the structuration theory, one way to conceptualise the dialectical condition of borders is to consider the structuring effects of borders “as both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize.”²⁸ Actors, by their actions, constantly produce and reproduce structures that both constrain and enable them. Considering the bordering dynamics (debordering and rebordering) in the light of their structuring effects (constraining and enabling) allows us to define four modalities that define borders, and the ways they are interpreted by local and regional actors (Table 1). Instead of associating debordering with opportunities and rebordering with constraints, our framework allows us to consider the significance of borders in a more comprehensive way, taking into account the new global realities that define international borders and the great variety of actors participating in their production. The four modalities should thus be seen as analytical categories whose relevance remains contingent on specific contexts.

When debordering is seen as enabling, the border is considered as a potential *resource* and can be mobilised by actors either to develop an economic benefit (based on value capture) or to promote cross-border reterritorialisation.²⁹ This way of understanding the role and meaning of borders, we contend, is useful for explaining the formation of cross-border metropolises from both an economic and political point of view. On the other hand, when debordering is seen as a constraint as in the post-9/11 era, the border appears as a *threat* to national security, cohesive identity or economic welfare. There is a sense of insecurity/vulnerability due to cross-border flows of people, goods or services that can lead to increased controls and closing of the borders. When rebordering is seen as an opportunity, the border can play the role of a *shield* that is supposed to protect one’s own cultural legacy and economic well-being.³⁰ In the last instance, where debordering is seen as a constraint, borders are representing *obstacles* to those who wish to develop cross-border connections, whether in the form of trade and economic development, political cooperation or socio-cultural activities.

In the remainder of this article, we explore two empirical cases in which some of these analytical categories surface. The underlying hypothesis is that, as

27. Newman, “The Lines that Continue to Separate Us”, *op. cit.*

28. Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984), p. 25.

29. Sohn, *op. cit.*

30. Van Houtum and Van Naerssen, *op. cit.*

cross-border metropolises evolve in different settings, the trade-offs between the dynamics of globalisation on the one hand and the presence of state borders on the other produce different outcomes. Our goal is to view those outcomes within the theoretical framework articulated above.

Empirical Evidence, Case 1: The San Diego–Tijuana/US–Mexico Border

An important example of the new transfrontier metropolis is found along the border between Mexico and the United States. More than 10 million people today live in transfrontier metropolitan regions that blanket the 2,000-mile boundary from Matamoros–Brownsville in the east to Tijuana–San Diego at the western terminus. Along the California–Mexico border, some 30 million vehicles and nearly 75 million people cross between California and Mexico each year. Urban neighbours are thrust into a complex transnational space of life, work and global security. This massive space of flows can be disaggregated into at least five major transfrontier activity circuits that connect US and Mexican economy and society within a cross-boundary region. Transfrontier labour markets define the spaces within which an estimated 300,000 workers legally travel across the border, from the Mexican to the US side of a transfrontier metropolis, to work in the United States on a daily or weekly basis.³¹ Over 60 billion dollars in trade occurs annually across the California–Mexico border, creating giant transfrontier consumer markets.³² Consumers constitute the most active group of legal border crossers, and are perhaps the primary population that ties together the two sides of the Mexico–US transfrontier metropolis. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), with its emphasis on opening borders and increasing economic integration, heightened the transfrontier connections between Mexican and Californian border cities. As a subset of the transborder economy, transnational tourism and related services represent a critical local economic sector, with a long history of connecting US consumers with Mexican vendors. Border tourism is a potentially large source of revenue in the border region, although it is compromised by the uncertainties of security, drug smuggling and border violence. Transfrontier manufacturing is the fourth activity that defines the US–Mexico transborder metropolis. A cheap labour enclave on the Mexican side of the border (i.e. *maquiladoras*) is linked to a headquarter office and warehouse on the US side of the border, creating within the larger fabric of the transfrontier metropolis a “twin plant” system of US investors/managers and Mexican assemblers.³³ Finally, one can argue that transnational housing and land markets represent the last cross-border economic sphere. Landownership is not restricted by national origin on the US side of the border, and is only partially restricted on the Mexican side.³⁴

31. See Lawrence Herzog, “Border Commuter Workers and Transfrontier Metropolitan Structure along the United States–Mexico Border”, *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1990), pp. 1–20.

32. See, for example, Lawrence A. Herzog, *Global Crossroads: Planning and Infrastructure for the California–Baja California Border Region* (San Diego, CA: Transborder Institute, 2009).

33. See Leslie Sklair, *Assembling for Development: The Maquila Industry in Mexico and the United States* (Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

34. In Mexico, foreigners can lease land for a period of time through the *fideicomiso* or trust arrangement; this is, in fact, how many Americans came to own land along the Baja California coast south of Tijuana during the boom years of the 1990s and prior to 9/11.

The Era of Debordering (as Resource) in San Diego–Tijuana, 1970–2001

Even before 1970, there was evidence that local interests were prepared to see the border as a resource for the future. As early as the 1960s, the City of San Diego recognised that its future would need to be cast with an eye towards its southern neighbour; a “Border Area Plan” was commissioned in 1965, the first attempt to rethink the growth of San Diego’s south bay area and its links with Mexico. That plan forecast San Ysidro as the anchor of the south bay/Mexico connection for the region.³⁵ In 1973, the City of San Diego commissioned two city planning specialists to carry out a major design and planning study of the future of the region. The resulting landmark report urged the city to rethink its planning strategies, placing greater emphasis on land use, environmental and design approaches that embraced the cross-border connections. As the report stated:

San Diego thinks of itself as a border town, but in reality it is part of the functioning metropolitan region of San Diego/Tijuana... San Diego/Tijuana could be the centre of a large international region, a vital meeting point of two living cultures. The metropolis would share its water, its energy, its landscape, its culture, its economy. The border would be converted into a zone of confluence.³⁶

By the mid-1970s the burgeoning economic and social ties between San Diego and Tijuana were bringing the cities into closer contact. In 1976, a coalition of US and Mexican institutions sponsored a bicentennial conference series called the “Fronteras Project” which brought together public and private officials from both sides of the border to describe the emerging interrelations of the San Diego–Tijuana region.³⁷ The following year, construction began on a 60 million dollar light rail connection between downtown San Diego and the Mexican border. One important rationale for building the “border trolley” was the growing interdependence between the two border cities.³⁸ The trolley’s “Blue Line” to the Mexican border opened in 1981, and, at its peak, is used by about 58,000 riders daily. A landmark 1978 study of the California border economy became the state of the art reference tool on the major economic sectors and policy issues for the region over the next decade.³⁹ At the local level, the San Diego Chamber of Commerce initiated new studies of the Mexican connection.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, concern for the growing impact of undocumented Mexican immigrants on the region unleashed a tide of new studies and reports.⁴¹

35. City of San Diego, *San Diego Border Area Plan* (San Diego, 1965).

36. Kevin Lynch and Donald Appleyard, “Temporary Paradise? A Look at the Special Landscape of the San Diego Region”, report to the City of San Diego, 1974.

37. See Fronteras, *A View of the Border from Mexico: Proceedings of a Conference* (San Diego, 1976); Fronteras, *San Diego–Tijuana: The International Border in Community Relations: Gateway or Barrier?* (San Diego, 1976).

38. See Metropolitan Transit Development Board, *San Diego–Tijuana: One Region* (San Diego, 1977).

39. State of California and US Economic Development Administration, *Economic Problems of the California Border Region* (Washington, DC, 1978).

40. Economic Research Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, “The Baja California–San Diego County Linkage”, in *San Diego Economic Profile* (San Diego, 1978).

41. See, for example, Community Research Associates, *Undocumented Immigrants: Their Impact on the County of San Diego* (San Diego, 1980).

All of these initiatives reflected the larger reality of growing physical connections between San Diego's south bay region and Tijuana. During the 1970s, Tijuana had fully channelised the Tia Juana River, while San Diego responded with a more modest dissipater facility. East of the San Ysidro port of entry, the two cities were negotiating a second border crossing, deemed crucial in light of the growing congestion at the existing border gate.⁴² By the early to mid-1980s, the idea of trans-frontier cooperation and binational planning began to emerge at local conferences, government meetings, public forums and in the print media.⁴³ Both the City of San Diego and County of San Diego created special offices to address border issues—the Binational Planning Office in the city; the Department of Trans-border Affairs in the county. The economic boom in southern California during the 1980s increased the attention of the national and local media on illegal immigration, while smuggling of narcotics began to increase along the California border. Furthermore, the problems of the border environment began to seriously confront regional planners, most notably those in the realm of border sewage spills, flooding and air pollution.⁴⁴

The early 1990s brought the passage of the NAFTA. Locally, non-governmental and policy organisations began to seriously study the cross-border flows.⁴⁵ For the 1996 Republican National Convention held in San Diego, a border briefing book was produced.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, concern with physical and land use planning around the question of a second border crossing and a binational airport on the Otay Mesa/Mesa de Otay evolved, along with growing attention to the environmental impacts of cross-border economic development.⁴⁷ During the early 1990s, tight budgets wiped out the two local border planning offices at the city and county levels. However, the City of San Diego continued to address cross-border issues through the City Manager Office's Binational Planning Program.⁴⁸ The County of San Diego held US–Mexico border summits that brought together county officials and Mexican officials. The county was heavily involved in cooperation with Mexico on service issues ranging from criminal justice, agriculture, environmental health and child services to air pollution and hazardous materials. The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) actively embraced cross-border planning with Tijuana, especially in the areas of watershed research, energy, transportation planning, data collection and the environment.⁴⁹

42. The key policy analysis on this issue was: Comprehensive Planning Organization, *International Border Crossing: Otay Mesa/Mesa de Otay* (San Diego, 1978).

43. See, for example, Lawrence A. Herzog, *Planning the International Border Metropolis* (La Jolla, CA: Center for U.S.–Mexican Studies, 1986).

44. See Herzog, *Where North Meets South*, *op. cit.*, chapter 7, pp. 189–246.

45. See San Diego Dialogue, *Who Crosses the Border* (San Diego, 1994); *Demographic Atlas: San Diego/Tijuana* (San Diego, 1995); *Planning for Prosperity in the San Diego/Baja California Region* (San Diego, 1993).

46. San Diego Dialogue, *The San Diego-Tijuana Binational Region, 1996: A Briefing Book* (San Diego, 1996).

47. See Mark J. Spalding (ed.), *Sustainable Development in San Diego-Tijuana* (La Jolla, CA: Center for U.S.–Mexican Studies, 1999).

48. See Greater San Diego Chamber of Commerce and San Diego Dialogue, *Planning for Prosperity in the San Diego/Baja California Region* (San Diego, 1993).

49. See the SANDAG webpage for the Borders Program, at: <<http://www.sandag.org/index.asp?classid=19&fuseaction=home.classhome>> (accessed 24 July 2013).

Table 2. US–Mexico Border Region Infrastructure Projects: San Diego–Tijuana 1970–2001 (Planned, Completed, Under Discussion or Phased Out).

Category	Project	Lead actor(s)
Transport	Twin ports/airport	City of San Diego
	Port of entry–Otay Mesa	County of San Diego, California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS), General Service Admin.
	San Diego Eastern Desert Rail Line	Metropolitan Transit Development Bd. (MTDB, now called MTS)
	Virginia Ave. border crossing	US, Mexico federal govt.
	San Ysidro Intermodal Transport Facility	San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), CALTRANS, City of San Diego, MTS
	Freeway Rts. 905, 125	CALTRANS
	Widening Otay Mesa Rd.	City of San Diego
	Tijuana light rail transit	Municipality of Tijuana (not completed)
	Tijuana 2000, peripheral highway ring	Secretary of Human Settlements, State of Baja California (SAHOPE)
	International Ave.: circulation plan for border crossing	Municipality of Tijuana
Land use	Road improvements	Municipality of Tijuana
	Las Americas, mixed use development	Land Grant Development (private) w. City of San Diego
Environment	Tijuana pedestrian space redevelopment at border crossing	Municipality of Tijuana
	Wastewater treatment plant	National Development Bank (NADB)/ Border Environmental Cooperation Commission (BECC)
	Ecopark expansion	NADB
	Southbay border wastewater treatment plant, SD	City of San Diego
	Border power plant	Pacific Gas & Electric (private)

An empirical examination of border region infrastructure projects from the period of heightened debordering (1970–2001) is presented in [Table 2](#), which lists projects by category (transport, land use, environment), region, project type and lead actors.⁵⁰ Several observations can be made about this period of debordering. First, the lead actors range from local, state and national political jurisdictions to private companies, quasi-public economic development agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and cross-border coalitions. Second, transportation and environmental projects dominated the landscape during this era. Roads, airports and rail lines were seen as positive assets to accompany cross-border economic development in the era of NAFTA. Environmental projects addressed longer-term resource management policy, and were also driven by NAFTA's emphasis on the environment, through one of two side agreements.

50. These data were gathered over a two-month period from first-hand interviews, public documents, websites and library archival sources. It does not represent a comprehensive list of all border region projects from the period, but rather an approximation of the scope of projects in the planning stages, under construction or completed by the end of this period, the year 2001.

Rebordering (as Obstacle) in San Diego–Tijuana, 2001–2011

During the decade following the 9/11 tragedy in the United States, the San Diego–Tijuana region experienced a powerful phase of rebordering, where protecting the boundary became an obstacle to cross-border social and economic integration. No region in North America was more impacted by the events of 11 September 2001 than the US–Mexico border region. Prior to the World Trade Centre tragedy, the buzzwords of the US–Mexico border were “global market.” The California border region was in a boom mode in the 1990s, building on the growing NAFTA-driven economic connections with Mexico. Along its most urbanised sector—the San Diego/Baja border—government and private interests were teaming up to launch a set of ambitious construction projects aimed at creating stronger cross-border ties to Baja California. As mentioned above, transborder highways, rail systems and even airports were on tap for the new millennium. State and local planning agencies were altering their master plans to support building infrastructure needed to assure the huge foreign trade revenues forecast for the region.⁵¹

Much of this optimism was stopped in its tracks after the events of 11 September 2001. Instead of new highways and border gates, a “wall” of heightened security wedged itself between California and Mexico. The formation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as a cabinet-level agency, consolidating the efforts of immigration, customs, border inspection, transportation security, border patrol and maritime security, marked a watershed moment in 2001–2002. It signalled the emergence of “security” as the primary objective in the management and organisation of the border zone, and the myriad facilities within its jurisdiction.⁵²

DHS eventually took the bold move of merging security policy with the needs of regional border users. For example, it developed a way to sort out low-risk border crossers who could be systematically identified and quickly moved across the border. The Secure Entry National Tracking and Information (SENTRI) program has achieved good results, although it needs to be expanded, both for cars and for pedestrians.⁵³ In addition to the pre-screening of low-risk users, DHS has put a great deal of effort into innovative new tracking technologies, including one for individual border crossers and one for trade goods.⁵⁴

While DHS acknowledged the role of infrastructure and the use of technology in making border crossings more efficient, its primary impact on the border was to introduce “national security” as the operating federal policy “paradigm” for the

51. For a description of some of these projects, see Lawrence A. Herzog, “Urban Development Alternatives for the San Ysidro Border Zone”, *Forum Fronterizo Paper*, San Diego Dialogue, 2000.

52. DHS oversees some 22 different agencies divided among four areas of concern: border and transport security, science and technology, information analysis and infrastructure protection, and emergency preparedness. Its objectives are to manage the nation’s borders and ports of entry, prevent the unlawful entry of illegal persons or goods, and work overseas to detect and block illegal smuggling operations.

53. Former INS Commissioner Doris Meissner told southern Californians in a December 2002 speech that it is wasteful to create giant traffic jams at the border, when 90 per cent of those being inspected are regular crossers who should not have to be kept waiting in line. If high-risk crossers could be separated from low-risk ones, the overall flow of people and vehicles over the line would be immensely improved and all would benefit. See Kenn Morris, “Moving toward Smart Borders”, *Forum Fronterizo Paper*, San Diego, June 2003.

54. For individuals, DHS created the Border Release Advanced Screening and Selectivity (BRASS) program, which tracks the entry and exit of people into the US. For commerce, it created a program called Fast and Secure Trade (FAST), which screens and tracks goods entering and leaving the US.

US–Mexico border. In fact, it is estimated that from 2001 to 2011, some 100 billion dollars was spent installing the security apparatus along the entire US–Mexico border. This has produced, among other things, some 700 miles of walls, fences and barriers, as well as hidden or mounted surveillance cameras, Predator drones, implanted sensors and more than 20,000 agents guarding the boundary. Some sources claim there are now even “off road forward operating bases,” high tech, rudimentary camps in rural areas where DHS agents gather and store intelligence. These kinds of outposts were commonplace during the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, where they were meant to house US soldiers deployed in remote areas.⁵⁵

This new border landscape stands in marked contrast to the scenario of the previous decade of the 1990s, where “economic development” had become the overarching theme in US–Mexico relations and the border. On many levels, the formation of a cabinet-level security agency like DHS represents the quintessential example of rebordering as an obstacle along the US–Mexico boundary. It illustrates the use of federal policy to promote the international boundary as a line of demarcation and control, one that does not merely shield and protect the border, but, in effect, impinges on the social space around it, to the detriment of economic actors in particular.⁵⁶

One micro-level example of rebordering as an obstacle during this era lies in the way DHS policy makers handled a local bicycle lane at the San Ysidro, California crossing. In the spring of 2002, DHS closed the bicycle lane, which had been adopted as a sustainable and local community response to the daily post-9/11 logjam of vehicles and pedestrians at the port of entry. The bicycle lane was providing a useful means for local commuters to avoid automobile traffic in the post-9/11 moment. DHS claimed the bicycle lane was dangerous. Critics argued that the federal agencies had undertaken no studies to look for alternatives that would allow an autonomous bike lane to exist.⁵⁷ The bicycle lane was eventually restored by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), but it was moved inside the US customs building, thus occupying space used by pedestrians. In 2006, the special bicycle lane was eliminated entirely, and cyclists now have to wait in very long lines with pedestrians, thus compromising their willingness to travel in this manner.⁵⁸

55. See Todd Miller, “Immigration Reform=Surveillance Reform”, *Naked Capitalism*, 12 July 2013, available: <<http://www.nakedcapitalism.com/2013/07/immigration-reform-surveillance-reform-as-military-tactics-move-inland-from-us-borders.html>>, accessed 25 July 2013.

56. During this period, the only transportation projects in play were the planning for a San Ysidro Intermodal Transit Center, including a new southbound pedestrian crossing moved to the east side of the interstate freeway, a proposed Virginia Ave Intermodal Transit Center, a proposed Otay Mesa East third border crossing facility, a proposed San Diego Freight Rail Yard Improvement project, and a proposed South Bay Rapid Transit project. All of the projects remain in the proposal stages. The San Ysidro Intermodal Transit Center is an outgrowth of the proposed remodelling of the San Ysidro border crossing a decade earlier.

57. “Why close out the only option without an alternative?” Rep. Bob Filner (D-San Diego) told the press, “The INS is like a bunch of Keystone Kops. They have no idea of what they are doing, and no notion of what the community wants.” See Lawrence Herzog, “The Border: Homeland Security is Not Enough”, *San Diego Union Tribune* (op. ed.), *Dialog*, 26 April 2009, p. F-4.

58. The government claimed it was closing the bicycle lane because people were renting run-down bikes at the border for a few minutes, just to save time. See “US Wants to Close Popular Pedestrian Border Crossing”, *New York Times.com*, 26 August 2007, available: <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/26/us/26crossing.html?_r=0>.

Other examples of DHS domination of the San Diego–Tijuana border region infrastructure include the so-called DHS “Border Fence Project” planned for some five miles of the boundary in San Diego. The fence offers another example of the conflict between border security and economic/social well-being. The plan is to construct the most severe of several design options, a version that would insert a militarised zone in a preserved ecological sanctuary. A triple fence would be heavily lit at night with an invasive, oversized paved road running through the centre. It would create a federal security corridor, patrolled by jeeps, vans and other heavy vehicles, in the heart of rare marshlands and sand dunes, and near the gathering places of some of North America’s most diverse wildlife, particularly migratory birds. This project was rejected by the State of California’s Coastal Commission because it would “do more harm than is necessary to the environment.”⁵⁹

More recently the 2013 US immigration bill, named the “Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act” of 2013, while originally intended to address the undocumented status of some 12 million Mexican immigrants in the US, has taken on a profound border security theme. Since the summer of 2013, advocates—mainly from the Republican party in Congress—have been pushing for a so-called “Comprehensive Southern Border Security Strategy.” It would add over 20,000 new border patrol officers along the border (doubling the total number to about 40,000), as well as calling for the construction of another 700 miles of border fencing.⁶⁰ Nearly 50 billion dollars would be allocated for the building of fences, additional border patrol officers, helicopters, sensors and drones to guard and fortify the international border with Mexico. This new policy direction has been termed a “border surge,” and some see it as bringing a militarised, war mentality to the US–Mexico border.⁶¹

Towards a Post-2011 Balancing Act: Debordering and Rebordering along the California–Mexico Border

It is clear that border policy in San Diego–Tijuana shifted from one extreme in the period 1970–2001 (debordering as resource) to another from 2001–2011 (rebordering as obstacle). Ostensibly, a healthier policy for globalising cross-border metropolises like San Diego–Tijuana would be to seek a balance between the opportunities presented by NAFTA, cross-border trade, labour markets and other activities which clearly bring the two cities and their economies into a common sphere, while at the same time preserving the necessary security a sovereign nation requires in an era of global crime, terrorist acts and other threats to nations. While DHS and other federal agencies spent the decade from 2001 to 2011 building security infrastructure that mostly became more of an obstacle than a more gentle “shield” (to use our conceptualisation of rebordering), cross-border opportunities for San Diego–Tijuana economic development (debordering as a positive resource mechanism) were mostly ignored in the fervour to make the border secure from terrorism. In the future, there are several critical

59. See Terry Rodgers, “Border Battle Brews”, *San Diego Union Tribune*, 7 October 2003, pp. B-1–2.

60. See a working version of this bill at: <<http://www.schumer.senate.gov/forms/immigration.pdf>> (accessed 25 July 2013).

61. Miller, *op. cit.*

debordering projects that could have significant impacts on the long-term economic development of the region, and thus cement the connection in the San Diego–Tijuana cross-border metropolis.

First, to be competitive in the global economy, a region like San Diego–Tijuana needs global transport infrastructure, including a port. Currently, the region is overshadowed by the ports of LA and Long Beach. The port of Ensenada is not considered large enough to serve as a global trade facility.⁶² The development of a mega-port facility at Punta Colonet could dramatically reshape the role of Baja ports in California–Mexico trade, and in the entire geography of the region's cross-border flows. A planned mega-port facility at Punta Colonet (80 miles south of Ensenada) would be one of Mexico's largest public infrastructure projects ever built. The port's primary function would be to move imported goods to the interior of the United States. Punta Colonet's impact would be greatly enhanced by a planned rail connection that could easily enter into the US rail system, either through Tecate or Mexicali.

A second form of debordering for the next few decades involves using the port and rail infrastructure to link up with key innovation centres that could be built south of the border. One is an industrial zone along the Tijuana–Tecate corridor, which might eventually produce what has been called a "jobs train," a rail system that could move inputs and outputs from the sub-region to major cities and ports on both sides of the border. A direct rail connection to a major industrial corridor in the eastern Tijuana/Tecate zone would enhance industrial growth, including the Toyota Tacoma factory which currently builds 170,000 truck beds and 20,000 full trucks per year. A second proposed innovation centre would connect with what is being called the "Silicon Border" project, a 10,000-acre science park, with US and Mexican private sector support. The idea is to build one of the premier computer chip (semi-conductor) production zones in the world in the nearby state capital of Baja California–Mexicali.⁶³ This billion dollar project sees itself as a rival to the current Asian dominance of semi-conductor manufacturing.

Empirical Evidence, Case 2: The Geneva Cross-Border Metropolis

In Europe, the cross-border metropolitan region of Geneva located at the Swiss–French border constitutes a good example to be contrasted with the San Diego–Tijuana case. Although the city of Geneva has only 200,000 inhabitants, the attractiveness of its banking sector and its numerous international as well as non-governmental organisations elevate the city to an important position within the circuits of globalisation. Well anchored within the global space of flows, Geneva's metropolitan development is also closely tied to the mobilisation of the territorial border as a resource, both from a geo-economic and a symbolic point of view. The progressive opening up of the border between Switzerland and France, linked with the EU, has

62. In the long term the Mexican government expects the Port of Ensenada to serve cruise ships and yachting, when it builds the mega-port at Punta Colonet. See David Greenberg, "Mexican Ports Could Take Traffic from LA", *Los Angeles Business Journal*, 16 August 2004.

63. Interestingly, this project was initiated by US entrepreneurs. The chairman of the project, D.J. Hill, claims that "Asia has not just taken manufacturing, but technology too, and a lot of people recognize that we need to do something about this." See Mary Jordan, "Mexican Officials Promote Silicon Border", *Washington Post*, 11 December 2004, p. E-1, available: <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A56549-2004Dec10.html>>.

been a catalyst for economic and political cross-border integration. The emerging cross-border metropolis of Geneva grew to 918,000 inhabitants by 2010, with more than half a million daily border crossings.⁶⁴

Debordering as a Geo-economic Resource for Geneva

Cross-border functional interactions began to accelerate in the 1960s and 1970s due to the vibrant economic growth experienced by Geneva, especially in the banking sector. This led to a widening of cross-border differentials with neighbouring France, both in jobs and wages. A proliferation of cross-border work trips ensued, cementing the increasing functional interdependence between the Swiss international city and its French periphery. The number of cross-border commuters rose from 5,500 in 1965 to 24,500 in 1974 at the time of the first oil shock. In 2001, just before the entry into force of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons between Switzerland and the EU,⁶⁵ there were almost 32,000 cross-border workers living in France and working in Geneva. Since then, the opening up of the border has been a catalyst for a surge in cross-border labour flows, with more than 63,000 French workers crossing to Geneva in 2013.⁶⁶ One should note that these figures include neither international officials nor Swiss citizens who live in France and work in Geneva (some 9,000 officials and 40,000 Swiss workers, respectively) and therefore underestimate the magnitude of the process of integration. As a matter of fact, the cross-border metropolitan region of Geneva (together with Luxembourg and Basel) now has one of the highest rates of cross-border labour movement in Europe.⁶⁷

This highly asymmetrical functional integration has been reinforced by the uneven urban development that characterises the cross-border urban space. On the one side, the canton of Geneva is strongly constrained by the Federal Law on Spatial Planning of 1979 that requires the Swiss cantons to preserve agricultural land on the basis of quotas. Thus, urban growth has tended to spill over to the French side, mainly in the form of residential construction. This metropolitan sprawl is reinforced by a chronic shortage of housing in Geneva and by lower real estate prices across the border in France. Residential growth in the French borderland (notably Annemasse and the Pays de Gex) underscores the emerging polarised land use pattern in the cross-border Geneva–France region: economic growth and jobs concentrate in Geneva, while residential activities cluster across the border in France. Data for the larger cross-border urban region confirms the trend: 75 per cent of workplaces relocated to Switzerland by 2008, while 65 per cent of new housing was built in France from 2000 to 2010.⁶⁸

64. See Grand Genève webpage at: <<http://www.grand-geneve.org/grand-geneve/le-territoire/chiffres-cles>>.

65. On 21 June 1999, the European Union and Switzerland signed seven bilateral agreements including the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons, which came into force on 1 June 2002. The right of free movement is complemented by the mutual recognition of professional qualifications, by the right to buy property and by the coordination of social security systems. The same rules also apply to citizens of European Free Trade Association (EFTA) member states (see <http://www.bfm.admin.ch/bfm/en/home/themen/fza_schweiz-eu-efta.html>).

66. OCSTAT L'Office Cantonal de la Statistique (OCSTAT), 2013, at: <http://www.ge.ch/statistique/domaines/apercu.asp?dom=03_05> (accessed 24 July 2013).

67. Decoville et al., *op. cit.*

68. See Grand Genève webpage at: <<http://www.grand-geneve.org/grand-geneve/le-territoire/chiffres-cles>>.

The Demise of the State Border as an Obstacle: The Construction of a Cross-Border Territorial Organisation

Until the beginning of the 1990s, the core–periphery relationship between Geneva and its French periphery was not institutionally grounded by specific measures for cross-border cooperation or planning for the future development of the cross-border metropolis. The only notable exception was the financial compensation agreement signed in 1973 by the two countries and the subsequent establishment of the Franco-Genevan Joint Consultative Commission.⁶⁹ Since then, two events have raised awareness among Geneva authorities about the potentially divisive nature of the national border and, thus, the need to reconsider Geneva’s relationship with its French hinterland. First was the development, in the late 1980s, of technology-intensive business parks on the French side that rely on lower labour costs yet benefit from the proximity to the financial centre of Geneva. These new French business ventures were perceived as a threat by the Swiss cantonal authorities. Second, the awareness of Geneva’s frontier setting was also reinforced by the refusal of Swiss citizens to integrate with the European Economic Area in the federal vote of 6 December 1992.⁷⁰ To counter its position as a quasi-territorial enclave, and to address the possible threat of isolation vis-à-vis the rest of Europe, the government of Geneva realised it must remain competitive against other global cities. Therefore Geneva (which had actually voted yes on the European economic question by more than 80 per cent) realised that it needed to promote its international image and recast its identity as a “gateway to Europe.” In both cases, the border location was recognised as a resource to be mobilised. To this end, Geneva politicians turned to their French local counterparts in order to engage in closer cross-border cooperation. Studies focused on planning for the cross-border region were carried out by the Franco-Genevan Regional Committee set up by the consultative commission created in 1973 and composed of local and regional authorities, as well as representatives of the French state. The concept of “Regio Genevensis” was developed with the objective, for the Geneva border region, to affirm the centrality of the Swiss canton.⁷¹ In 1993, a white paper on urban planning was prepared, followed in 1997 by a charter for the development of the cross-border urban agglomeration including 10 development projects. Most of these projects were aimed at enhancing cross-border functional interactions and promoting the international image of the city.

A new milestone was reached in the early 2000s with the creation of the “Franco-Valdo-Genevan agglomeration project” supported by the French as well as the Swiss governments. While the support from France is mainly symbolic, in the form of recognition of the cross-border project goals, the Swiss Confederation is providing financial support.⁷² Developed between 2004 and 2006, the Franco-

69. According to the fiscal compensation agreement, 3.5 per cent of the cross-border payroll is paid by Geneva to the French border towns in proportion to the number of cross-border workers they host. In 2011, the amount refunded to the French towns reached 190 million Euros. See <<http://archives.tdg.ch/geneve/actu/fonds-frontaliers-compensation-financiere-genevoise-atteint-records-2011-12-21>>.

70. François Moullé, “L’agglomération transfrontalière genevoise: acteurs, stratégies et fonctions internationales”, in B. Reitel et al. (eds.), *Villes et frontières* (Paris: Economica, 2002), pp. 114–123.

71. Jean-Pierre Leresche and Michel Bassand, “The Emergence of the ‘Lemanique Metropole’: A Process of Apprenticeship”, *Political Geography*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (1995), pp. 401–417.

72. See Christophe Sohn and Bernard Reitel, “The Role of National States in the Construction of Cross-Border Metropolitan Regions in Europe: A Scalar Approach”, *European Urban and Regional Studies* (2013), doi: 10.1177/0969776413512138.

Valdo-Genevan agglomeration project brings together local and regional authorities on either side of the border. Joint planning of transportation infrastructure and urban development highlights the agenda of this cross-border cooperation initiative. Financial support from the Swiss Confederation facilitated the building of the CEVA railway junction between the Cornavin station in Geneva and Annemasse, thus creating a transborder connection between the Swiss and French rail networks. A cross-border light rail line is also planned.

There are still many policy challenges ahead. For example, spatial and socio-economic inequalities continue to characterise the cross-border metropolis. Traffic congestion from cross-border worker flows tends to generate national resentment. An urban development strategy specifically recommends that by 2030 the population growth should be shared equally between Switzerland and France and that a third of the jobs created should be located in France by means of fiscal incentives to companies.⁷³ This more equitable sharing of economic activities and residence evokes the idea of development of a common sense of belonging, a shared vision and an imagined future of cross-border cooperation. But it is a long-term goal and stakeholders on both sides of the border are well aware of its respective strengths and weaknesses. Without the establishment of an ad hoc tax and regulatory framework by the French government, the authorities of Annemasse know they are unlikely to attract financial institutions and international organisations into their territorial jurisdiction.

In 2012, the formation of the Geneva cross-border metropolitan region has been pushed a step further with the implementation of a new juridical tool (called “Local Grouping for Cross-border Cooperation”) which allows for a more permanent mode of governance and the reinforcement of the autonomy of the cross-border entity vis-à-vis the Franco-Genevan Regional Committee. In the meantime, the leadership of Geneva over the cross-border agglomeration is asserted symbolically through the choice of “Greater Geneva” as a new name.

Debordering as a Threat: The Geneva Fears against Cross-Border Integration

While a majority of the Geneva political and economic elite supports this process of building a cross-border metropolis and sees the border as a resource for the international competitiveness of the city, a xenophobic minority emerged during the 2000s. This group expressed resentment against French cross-border workers. Its base comes mainly from the far right regionalist party named *Mouvement des Citoyens Genevois*, or MCG (Geneva Citizens’ Movement), who blame the cross-border workers for unemployment, violence and insecurity; this group often campaigns for a rebordering of the national territory. Although it is a minority, the MCG still received almost 15 per cent of the votes at the cantonal elections in 2009 (17 representatives out of 100 in the Genevan council); more recently they were big winners in the local elections in 2011.

The main reasons for this xenophobic discourse (which portrays the border as a threat to socio-economic welfare) lies in the tensions in the local labour market resulting from the opening of borders, and the perception of increased competition

73. Christophe Sohn, Bernard Reitel and Olivier Walther, “Cross-Border Metropolitan Integration in Europe: The Case of Luxembourg, Basel, and Geneva”, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, Vol. 27, No. 5 (2009), pp. 922–939.

between Swiss workers and cross-border workers.⁷⁴ The relatively high unemployment rate in Geneva, by comparison with the rest of Switzerland (6 per cent in Geneva vs. 3.3 per cent nationally) is fuelling this tension. Cross-border workers account for about a quarter of all jobs in Geneva but the vast majority occupy low-skilled positions in the banking, trade and catering sectors. Most of those jobs would not be taken by local residents, either because of the shortage of labour (for example, nurses at the University Hospitals of Geneva) or due to a lack of interest in strenuous work (such as in restaurants).⁷⁵ Despite these economic realities, the cross-border worker is perceived, by some Swiss residents, as “a profiteer who makes a well-paid living in Geneva and spends his money in France.”⁷⁶

Conclusions

In this article, we have provided a conceptual framework for the analysis of what we call “bordering dynamics.” We contend that this approach exposes various meanings and roles that borders will increasingly play in the context of globalisation and territorial restructuring. Applied to the cases of San Diego–Tijuana and Geneva–French periphery, such an analytical lens allows one to better scrutinise the logics at play and disentangle the contradictory dynamics that shape the cross-border metropolises. Border functions and significance are no longer merely defined by nation-states only, but rather result from the activities and practices of various actors, including local and regional communities, political entrepreneurs, transborder networks or institutions and global economic players. As social and political constructions, international borders themselves become laboratories for revealing the mechanisms that will govern the future organisation of cross-border metropolitan spaces.

The cross-border integration trajectories uncovered for the two case studies explored in this article stand in stark contrast. This is, of course, not entirely surprising given the severe differences between the geo-economic, cultural as well as institutional setting that prevails in North America as opposed to Europe. On the one hand, San Diego–Tijuana was forced to confront a drastic rebordering imposed by the US federal government after 2001, one that has had an enormous negative impact upon cross-border social and economic interactions since then. Conceived as a kind of shield constructed to protect the homeland, the border has morphed into an obstacle to local and regional cross-border businesses. On the other hand, Geneva was able to benefit from a gradual shift towards what we term a debordering condition, one aimed at strengthening cross-border ties with its French counterpart. Although Switzerland is not part of the EU, there is clearly a Europeanisation dynamic at play in the case of Greater Geneva, particularly as far as cross-border territorial governance is concerned.

Despite these obvious contrasts, similarities between the two cross-border metropolises can also be identified. These yield more general conclusions about the logic and the processes that shape these urban configurations that are so emblematic of

74. Jean-Baptiste Delaugerre, “Être frontalier en Suisse: le cas du canton de Genève”, in R. Belkacem and I. Pigeron-Piroth (eds.), *Le travail frontalier au sein de la Grande Région Saar-Lor-Lux: pratiques, enjeux et perspectives* (Nancy: Presses universitaires de Nancy, 2012), pp. 237–253.

75. *Ibid.*, pp. 237–253.

76. *Ibid.*, p. 243.

twenty-first-century globalisation. First, it seems clear that opening the frontier allows border cities and urban regions to strengthen their economic development and reinforce their position within the larger networks of globalisation. In both San Diego–Tijuana and Geneva, strong economic differentials have triggered cross-border flows (trade, workers and so forth). These social or economic exchanges in the areas of labour, production networks, shopping or residence have given shape to functionally integrated urban regions that extend across national borders. Cross-border planning and infrastructure development, particularly in the area of transport infrastructure, is also part of the dynamic, although it is highly dependent on the willingness of political actors to cooperate.

Second, it is the convergence of the various actors involved in seeing the border as a resource that ends up being essential for cross-border metropolises to develop. Such a convergence of interests, be it explicit or implicit, does not simply result from the opening up of borders and the rise of new opportunities that such a debordering may represent. This is, indeed, a process that becomes contingent upon negotiations, as well as political struggles, to find the proper balance of power. The way borders are conceived is a contested process by nature since they are political and social constructions that incorporate as well as shape power relations. The cross-border metropolis is therefore an ongoing construction, a contested process where the different meanings of the border are to be (re)negotiated. Such a process is also highly “unstable” as other interests and visions concerning the meanings of borders can rise and challenge the development of the cross-border metropolis. In San Diego–Tijuana it is the US national rebordering that has impacted the development of the metropolis by recasting the border as a shield, in effect turning what was a positive feature into an obstacle to those who wish to cross it. Following a decade of closure and enhanced controls, it appears that a better balance between cross-border economic development and security policy is moving back onto the political agenda. At stake ultimately is the negotiation of the best way to mediate the enabling effect of debordering (the border as a resource) and rebordering (the border as a shield). In the case of Geneva, the debordering process is supported by most of the local political actors as well as the nation-states as the best option for the development of the cross-border region. However, these growing socio-economic interdependencies also generate discontent, especially among the more conservative Swiss residents who see the open border as a threat to their national interests and well-being. Further negotiation and consensus building is needed in order to sustain the cross-border metropolitan integration process.

In the end, what appears to be critical is the capacity of cross-border metropolises to constantly adapt their transfrontier strategy to promote consensus among key players in order to counter the dynamics that represent a hindrance to economic and territorial infrastructure development. When the cross-border metropolis is conceived as a socio-economic entity with some strategic capability, the border should not only be viewed as an economic resource (i.e. a source of revenue), but also as a political asset mobilised through the framework of a “place-making” strategy. This will allow the promotion of a shared spatial imaginary (e.g. a vision of future urban development), the development of governance capacity based on trust and willingness to cooperate, and the building of a common sense of belonging. Taken together, these become the building blocks of an emerging regional resilience that will empower cross-border metropolises to

embrace the challenges of globalisation and the different bordering dynamics that may emerge. Both San Diego–Tijuana and Geneva–French periphery will face these challenges in the coming decades.

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