



Christian Leuprecht, Todd S. Hataley, eds. *Security. Cooperation. Governance.: The Canada-United States Open Border Paradox.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2023. xvi + 209 pp. \$29.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-472-05571-5.

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Published on H-Diplo (May, 2024)

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On November 22, 2023, the Rainbow Bridge border crossing in Niagara Falls was rocked by an explosion.[1] The incident was quickly ruled to be a deadly traffic accident, but not before hours of erroneous conjecture about terrorism proliferated throughout social media and at least one major news channel.[2] This dramatic episode quickly receded from the headlines, but the border returned to the news little more than a month later in January with the reporting of government plans to station Canada Border Services Officers in the United States for the purpose of preclearing travelers to Canada.[3] While US preclearance in Canada is already commonplace, the idea of stationing Canadian officers on US soil for regular processing purposes generated concerns about how such a jurisdictional shift would affect both Canada Border Services Agency workers and migrants to Canada. These two recent events speak to the extent to which the US-Canada border generates conflicting sentiments of anxiety and frustration on both sides of it. Border security remains a perennial concern, and suspicions about the border as a site of vulnerability have proven inescapable. Conversely, the deep social and economic connections between the two countries mean that the border can often seem to be an inconvenient obstacle that must be overcome through the dis-

covery of further efficiencies to facilitate travel and trade. In other words, the border is simultaneously feared to be overbearing and underprotective. But these negative perceptions are regularly overshadowed by positive ones. The maintenance of the US-Canada border is often celebrated as a profound bilateral achievement, and there is little appetite for erasing it in a manner analogous to the European Schengen Area. The United States and Canada agree that the border should be preserved, and that it should be preserved jointly.

This remarkable interplay between international integration and differentiation is the focal point of *Security. Cooperation. Governance. The Canada-United States Open Border Paradox*, edited by Christian Leuprecht and Todd Hataley. According to Leuprecht, Hataley, and Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, the paradox in question is that “borders depend on extensive cross-border cooperation for their effectiveness and legitimacy” (p. 2). This central theme is complemented by three other explicit focal points. First, the maintenance of the US-Canada border reflects a great deal of subnational regional variation, a reality that is obscured by prevailing accounts that prioritize sovereign boundary lines and the two countries’ federal governments. Second, the border mediates connections not just between countries but entit-

ies within them, including municipalities, provinces, states, and Indigenous territories. Finally, borders are more than cartographic demarcations that establish the geographic extent of state sovereignty. They can instead be construed as a “regime, where power and politics are geographically and functionally dispersed, and a common set of interests, institutions, ideology, and ideas shapes the trajectory of border change” (p. 2).

This book achieves the ambitious objectives it sets for itself. Perhaps its most impressive feature is the empirical depth and detail it is able to succinctly provide in order to convincingly illustrate its overarching points. This is especially notable given the long list of contributing authors it contains. Indeed, the editors note that they intentionally leveraged the expertise of several practitioner-scholars whose experiences in government, policymaking, and law enforcement likely helped to generate the book’s empirically grounded and precisely focused concentration on the border as a concrete site of policy action, even as the overall message makes the case for some reconceptualization of it.

The book is divided by region. Read in order, the chapters take the reader from west to east, and then finally to Canada’s far north. Chapters are allocated to British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest, Alberta and the Northwest, the Prairies and the Midwest, Ontario and the Great Lakes, Quebec and the Eastern Seaboard, Atlantic Canada and New England, and finally the Territorial North. This pathway does help to underscore some of the central points mentioned above, but the chapters are, to a significant extent, self-contained studies and could be usefully read in isolation or any order. Each chapter is descriptively rich, first covering relevant themes before concluding with illustrative case studies that empirically distill key conceptual points. Overall, the text is structured to maximize clarity, which is essential given the extent to which the chapters report a great deal of fine detail on their subject.

By illustrating the paradox inherent in the cross-national maintenance of an international border regime, the contributors make clear that even amidst a steadfast bilateral commitment to cooperation, international relations remain challenging. Across most of the regions studied, the analysis and accompanying evidence leave the impression of various authorities trying to solve a puzzle. Rather than competitively optimizing their relative gains, or independently maximizing their own preferences for growth and security, policymakers internationally collaborate and struggle to reconcile shared preferences and tenets that are in tension with each other. There is little disagreement across the boundary line about the desirability of unencumbered commerce and regulated but easy travel. The difficulty arises when these ambitions meet the challenge of respecting the boundary line dividing the two countries, a tenet about which all policy actors also basically agree. The central tension in the US-Canada border regime is revealed throughout the book to not principally lie in the two countries’ competing interests, but rather in their shared agenda.

The book contains numerous illustrative examples of this dynamic in which the impulse to collaborate for the purpose of preserving the border encounters the imperative to avoid erasing it in the process. In their study of Ontario and the Great Lakes, Hataley and Leuprecht analyze the Integrated Cross-Border Maritime Law Enforcement Operations, known as Shiprider, in the Great Lakes. This program accentuated the marine enforcement capacities of Canadian and US authorities in the Great Lakes, but these elevated capacities mostly stop at the shoreline, with officers only able to continue their interventions on land under exigent circumstances. For Hataley and Leuprecht, this is a serious shortcoming. The program’s potential is diminished “because it is restricted to acting only at the border, not beyond” (p. 115). The explanation for why this program has been circumscribed in such a way may be intuitive. Authorities are reflexively reluctant to transform

border measures into more comprehensive policing or regulative regimes for fear of compromising their distinct domain of sovereign authority that these borders are understood to protect. However, Hataley and Leuprecht, along with some other contributors elsewhere in the volume, suggest that such caution may be misplaced. The call to reconceptualize borders as inwardly and outwardly extensive regimes, rather than boundary lines or strictly defined points in physical space, is more than an academic appeal. The book shows that such a reconceptualization could inform better policies as well.

The book's call for an empirically and conceptually comprehensive account of the US-Canada border is reinforced in Heather Nicoll, Adam LaJeunesse, Whitney Lackenbauer, and Karen Everett's chapter about Canada's northern territories. This region could be easily overlooked in a study of US-Canada border affairs, given the relatively limited population and capital flows in the north. However, the authors show it to be a worthwhile area of study. It certainly includes Canada's land border with Alaska, but the complexities of border management are compounded as maritime boundaries, territorial disputes, changing ecological conditions, and the Arctic's global strategic importance for great powers underscore the value of a regionally differentiated account of Canada's international border regime. The global extent of Canada's border politics in the country's north is made clear by a brief case study focused on the ongoing uncertainty about the Chinese government's Arctic ambitions and their implications for Canada. However, the authors are equally clear that the region should not be reduced to a zone of military monitoring and posturing, where the border exists only in conventionally geostrategic terms. Climate change in particular promises to continue deepening the significance of human, economic, and environmental security throughout Canada's north.

Certainly, Indigenous politics and border affairs intersect to a significant degree in the Canadian north. To its credit, *Security. Cooperation. Governance.* accounts for Indigenous border dynamics across various border regions. Benjamin Muller, Laurie Trautman, and Nicole Bates-Eamer's analysis of the British Columbian and Pacific Northwestern border region makes clear that the US-Canada border is a fundamentally colonial boundary that continues to disrupt Indigenous peoples, including those belonging to the Salish Nations located in British Columbia and Washington State, often in the name of a state-centric security agenda. Their analysis buttresses Leuprecht and Hataley's calls to move beyond traditional statist conceptualization of borders, but with somewhat different implications. Hataley and Leuprecht note that governments' static and statist perception of the border might inform a reluctance to integrate security programs more thoroughly, and consequently encumber the efficient transnational deployment of security resources. Muller, Trautman, and Bates-Eamer, as well as other contributors' assessments of Indigenous peoples' relationships to the US-Canada border elsewhere, reveal a different problem. They demonstrate that state-centricity can inform potentially excessive impositions of regulatory power by state authorities over Indigenous peoples.

There is an impressive amount of empirical detail succinctly packaged in this well-organized text. Its concision bolsters the book's value as a point of reference for anyone seeking to broaden or deepen their knowledge of US-Canada border affairs. If there is one area where some might find the text could benefit from further development, it would be in the opportunities for more extensive and explicit theoretical elaboration. The descriptive detail in each chapter makes them extremely informative, but the promising conceptual insights that frame the work as a whole are sometimes left understated or implicit as the details of each case are explored. There is value in concision, how-

ever, and further theoretical explorations would undoubtedly expand the text and perhaps blunt its informative and precise focus on the concrete policy domain. Anyone seeking to further explore the theoretical implications of the various regions analyzed in the text will be far better off for having read it.

Taken together, the contributions to this volume offer an account of a specific form of international relations in which cooperation is not stymied by contradictory interests or uneven commitments, but by a tension inherent in a collaborative project. The US and Canada simultaneously maintain a commitment to both integration and differentiation when constructing border policy, and they are regularly confronted with the challenge of synthesizing these objectives rather than constructing a zero-sum trade-off between them. This volume serves as a thoroughly informative corrective to state-centric reflexes that might produce the zero-sum thinking that both countries are interested in avoiding. By expanding the remit of border studies beyond a static political boundary toward a regionally differentiated social regime through which countries collaborate to maintain their spaces of governance, it may be possible to amend the thinking of both researchers and policymakers in a productive manner. At the very least, it provides a deeper understanding of a struggle for cooperation that shapes border management in the US-Canada space.

Notes

[1]. Ted Hesson and Jonathan Landay, “Fiery Rainbow Bridge Car Crash at US-Canada Border Kills 2; Terrorism Ruled Out,” Reuters, November 22, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/authorities-monitoring-incident-bridge-niagara-falls-ny-governor-says-2023-11-22/>.

[2]. Billie Schwab Dunn, “Fox News Sparks Fury over NY-Canada Border Explosion,” *Newsweek*, November 23, 2023, <https://www.newsweek.com/fox-news-sparks-fury-over-border-explosion-1846323>.

[3]. Elizabeth Thompson, “Canadian Customs Officers Could Soon Be Based in the U.S. for the First Time,” *CBC News*, January 12, 2024, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-u-s-border-pre-clearance-1.7081019>.

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Citation: Daniel Troup. Review of Leuprecht, Christian; Hataley, Todd S., eds, *Security. Cooperation. Governance.: The Canada-United States Open Border Paradox*. H-Diplo, H-Net Reviews. May, 2024.

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