

# BORDERLANDS IN AFRICA

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY AND  
COMPARATIVE FOCUS ON  
NIGERIA AND WEST AFRICA

*Edited by*

A.I. ASIWAJU

*Professor of History*

*and*

P.O. ADENIYI

*Professor of Geography*

UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS PRESS — NIGERIA

# Table of Contents

Notes on Editors and Contributors	v
Preface	ix
Acknowledgements	xv
Foreword	xvii
List of Figures	xxi
List of Tables	xxiii

## SECTION I

### **BORDERS AND BORDERLANDS: THE SPATIAL ASPECT** 25

- 1 Identification and Characteristics of Borderlands in Africa  
*O. Adejuyigbe* 27
- 2 Legal Perspective on Border Issues *M.A. Ajomo* 37
- 3 Borderland as the Function of Space and Time *E.K. Ogundowole* 45
- 4 A Critique of Borderland Theories *C.S. Momoh* 51
- 5 Borderlands: Policy Implications of Definition for Nigeria's 'Gateway'  
State Administrations and Local Governments *A.I. Asiwaju* 63

## SECTION II

### **THE FUNCTIONAL BORDER** 85

- 6 Territorial Behaviour in Animals *S.L.O. Malaka* 87
- 7 Urban Marginality's Perception of Self *E.D. Babatunde* 105
- 8 Bridges Across Africa's Ethnic Boundaries *N. Ugonna* 117
- 9 Buchi Emecheta's *Destination Biafra* *K. King-Aribisala* 129
- 10 The Black Aesthetic *M.L. Nwuneli* 139
- 11 Border in French and French-African Literature *M.A. Johnson* 151
- 12 Boundary Problems and the Policies of African Nations  
*D.A. Aderibigbe* 161

## SECTION III

**STUDIES AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS 178**

- 13 The Process of Cartographic Definition of Nigerian Boundaries  
*O.Y. Balogun* 181
- 14 International and Interstate Boundaries in Nigeria *O. Adebekun* 205
- 15 A Socio-Linguistic Profile of Nigeria's Northern and Eastern Borders  
*C.M.B. Brann* 213
- 16 Borderland 'Equilibrium' in Africa *V. Owhotu* 247
- 17 Transborder Cultural Interaction *S. Aradeon* 259
- 18 Nationality and Citizenship *O. Adigun* 271
- 19 Borders in International Relations and Military Strategy  
*A.E. Ekoko* 279
- 20 Potentials of Nigerian Boundary Corridors as Sources of International  
Economic Conflict *J.L.O. Ekpenyong* 293
- 21 Lake Chad as an Instrument of International Co-operation  
*I. James* 307
- 22 Off-Shore Boundaries and Jurisdictional Zones in Relation to  
ECOWAS Countries *J.O. Akintola-Arikawe* 317
- 23 The Political Economy of Artificial  
Boundaries *O. Akintola-Bello* 331
- 24 Transborder Data Flow and Action Plan for ECOWAS *O. Abass* 339
- 25 The Role of Communication in Border Relations *I. Sobowale* 345
- 26 Cosmopolitanism vs. Provincialism *A. Fakolade* 353

## SECTION IV

**RESEARCH STRATEGIES AND A PROPOSED AGENDA 361**

- 27 Some Questions and 'Sky' Solutions to Border Resource Management  
*P.O. Adeniyi* 363
- 28 Methodology of the Multi-disciplinary Problem *F.A. Adeyoyin* 375
- 29 Border Studies: The State of the Art in Europe *R. Strassoldo* 385
- 30 Research Activity on the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands  
*O.J. Martinez* 397
- 31 Developmental Stages of U.S.-Mexico Borderlands Studies  
*E.R. Stoddard* 403
- 32 The 'Area Study' Approach to Research on Nigeria's Borders  
*A.I. Asiwaju* 425
- Appendix—Minister's Keynote Address *Major General Magoro* 433

# Border Studies: The State of the Art in Europe

by Raimondo Strassoldo

## Traditional Border Studies

Europe is a densely, thickly settled region, with an old written history and a large number of centres of study and research. Every inch of its territory, every local community, however small, almost every human group has been the object of more or less extensive, recent and "scientific" literature. Border communities are no exceptions. In most of them one finds a vast storage of knowledge on local history and geography—civil libraries, museums, cultural institutions, academies, individual scholars. The border, being *one of* the defining features of such communities, most of this literature can be considered as "border studies" or, it can be re-analyzed in such a framework.<sup>1</sup>

Then there are those studies where the border is *the* focus of analysis. This can be of two sorts. One is mainly "academic", descriptive/interpretative, and usually carried out in the context of "regional geography". Borderlands are places where the "anthropic" realities and, in particular, social, political and economic institutions, make a peculiar imprint on the physical landscape (Whyttlessey). Moreover, in these places it is easy to carry out comparative studies. Thus within regional geography one finds a sizable spate of analyses of border regions.<sup>2</sup>

The second type of traditional, explicit border studies is characterized by its focus on disputed, conflictual borders of nation-states, its legal-military-political approach, and often its policy-orientation. Such studies are often instigated by institutions dealing with foreign and military policy, and are motivated by the search of the "just" or "natural" boundaries, by the effort to legitimize some of them or to lay claim to some others. The literature of this type is large; some such studies are unabashedly ideological or instrumental, others are more objective and scholarly; some are quite local, particularistic, others have broader views and more universalistic, (i.e. generalizing, aspirations). Political geography and geopolitics are the disciplines in which border problems are more extensively and systematically treated.

In sum, "traditional" border studies are characterized by a legal and geographical theoretical approach, by the focus on conflict, (i.e. on disputed



borders, and by a statist ideological orientation).<sup>3</sup>

### Modern Border Studies

Since the mid-sixties, a wholly different sort of border studies have developed in Europe. They are characterized by a new emphasis on the socio-economic aspects; focused on integrative, rather than conflictual processes, and on the problems of border people, instead of the nation states; and are instigated by local authorities and European organizations, rather than by national governments. Even more than the traditional ones, however these studies are policy-orientated.

The distinction between "traditional" and "modern" (or, perhaps better, between "old-fashioned" and "contemporary"), like most such dichotomies, is more logical than ontological. Descriptive studies of state boundaries and their adjoining areas are still being done, although political geography suffered along period of neglect, and regional geography, as the systematic description of regional differences, has long lost its centrality among the geographic disciplines. On the other hand, in older literature one can find some examples of strikingly modern approaches; (e.g. the "theorie des frontieres" put forth eighty years ago by the Belgian sociologist and social reformer, Guillaume De Greef), and the "social principle" of boundary-making suggested shortly afterwards by the geographer, L.W. Lyde. The former suggested that the general social processes of differentiation of the internal structures of social systems are paralleled by corresponding processes at their boundaries, which tend to "fray" at the same time as the processes—sometimes indicated as "ecological expansion" (i.e. the widening of social systems) bestow a crucial role on border areas as the "growth poles" the junction and saturation between societies.<sup>4</sup> Lyde, in discussing the criteria for the best way to draw boundaries between societies, criticized the widely prevailing "separation" principle, according to which boundaries should be drawn along the lines of minimum contact, (i.e. in less populated and active places); on the contrary, he maintained, they should be drawn across thickly settled areas and towns, in order to "force" the neighbouring powers to cooperate in the management. This is roughly akin to the "buffer-state" and the "condominium" principles; but makes sense only in a pacifist and integrationist perspective.<sup>5</sup>

There are no direct links between such speculations and modern border studies in Europe, which arise from two different, albeit intertwined, socio-political developments. One is the post-war drive for European unity, the second is the re-awakening of localism and regionalism. The new Europe was envisioned by many as the "Europe of the peoples", not of the State-Nations. The emphasis on economic integration, the "Common Market", was meant as one of the instruments and avenues of socio-cultural-political integration; but there were others. One was the establishing of a tissue of direct communication and cooperation between local communities, across state boundaries. This was taken up as special province by the Council of Europe. It was on its lap that representatives of local communities from the whole of the Western part of the continent met and organized themselves as Council of European Local and Regional Authorities to exchange views, compare problems, think out common solutions. And it was soon clear that the communities and regions, more struck by European divisions and more eagerly pressing for its integration, were those located in the borderlands. Their "cahiers de doléances" began to show typical patterns. Border regions emerged as a distinctive type of regions, characterized usually by:

- a) problems of ethnic and linguistic minorities;
- b) economic problems due to the peripheral location with respect to their national core areas and to the dependency of borderland economies on the vagaries of boundary policies and international relations;
- c) cultural and psychological problems, due to often ambiguous relationships both with the centres and the communities across the boundaries; and
- d) planning and environmental problems.

Border areas are the ones where the physical infrastructure of the neighbouring systems have to be harmonized; they are often real "bridges" across nations. But marginal areas are also the ones in which the mainstream societies tend to dump their wastes, and locate obnoxious plants. As "pollution knows no frontier", there are problems of coordinated environmental control.<sup>6</sup>

Local authorities in borderlands, of course, did no limit themselves to the presentation of problems. They were long busy in trying to meet them, to set up cross-border organizations. Such activities were quite informal and in fact, illegal in most European countries, where all "foreign" relations are direct responsibility of the central states; only a few of them allowed some, very limited, competence to local and regional authorities in this field (notably in the federal states like Switzerland, Germany and Austria). Much of the cross-border "transactions" were therefore of a spontaneous, "private" type; a growing need was felt to recognize themselves as a pressure group to force the states, first, to proceed faster on the road of European integration and, second, to devolve on frontier regions more power to deal with their peculiar problems.

The potential of frontier regions as a special force toward continental integration was quickly perceived both by Europeans activists and theorists and by the Council of Europe. But the potential of European organizations in protecting and furthering their interests was equally well perceived by the representatives of border regions. This alliance seemed particularly felicitous to those who envisioned a federalist, bottom-up, regionalist, model of a united Europe, as a collection of local and regional authorities.<sup>7</sup> A colder reception was given to the issue by those who had other ideas about Europe. Thus, for the economy-oriented technocrats of the Common Market, the problems of border regions are simply wither a) problems of imperfect integration, which will wither away as the union progresses; or b) problems of economic and spatial marginality, to be redressed by policies of regional re-equilibrium.

The issues of "frontier regions" (as borderlands are usually called in Euro-Franglais)<sup>8</sup> were presented in ever more numerous and important forums. What formerly were simple "log rolls", passionately spelled out by mayors and other political leaders, grew into more and more systematic and detailed studies, especially in the issues of planning and of "frontier workers".<sup>9</sup> They were instigated by both local authorities and sectional interests (such as the Chambers of Commerce) and by European organizations. But also some centres of academic research grew interested in the subject. These literature constitutes what we have called the modern border studies in Europe.<sup>10</sup>

They can be classified and analyzed in a number of ways. Some are local (case studies), some are more general. Some (few) are more empirical, others more conceptual, theoretical and speculative. Some are more descriptive, others heavily normative.

It is not easy to pronounce judgement on over-all quality. We feel that they could be much better, if concerned parties could invest in them even a small PP fraction of what is spent on other fields. We also feel that the most rigorous and useful are the juridical studies. Economic and sociological research on European borderlands with a focus on the effects of the border, its problem and their solutions is almost nil.<sup>11</sup>

This posits a problem in the sociology of science (or sociology of knowledge). Why is empirical, broadly social, research on borders so woefully underdeveloped in Europe? One possible answer lies in the general underdevelopment of the concerned disciplines, and in the generally lower status of empirical research, relative to the situation in other cultures (we are thinking especially of the U.S.). A second explanation is that the "frontier region movement" is concerned not so much with the detailed description and analysis of the problems, but with their potential as political issues, with their instrumentality in furthering the interests of local communities and of European unity. The common attitude is "we know enough; what we need is to act". While this is understandable, it is hardly conducive to research. The shortcomings easily manifest in a society where more and more the decisions, even political ones, are rested on rational basis inspired by an objective knowledge of the real world. The peril is that European border studies end up by feeding only on themselves.<sup>12</sup>

### The Diversity of European Borderlands

The special features of "modern" European border studies can thus be traced back to the prospects for integration which are rather peculiar to this subcontinent. Here however it should be pointed out that European borderlands are of many different species, in correspondence to different geographical and political contexts.<sup>13</sup>

*Central Axis.* Most of the "frontier regions" literature basically refers to the common borders of the Netherlands, Belgium, France and West Germany. This is, politically and economically, the core area of integrating Europe; and the local and regional communities in this area (essentially along the Rhine axis) have been the pioneers in the field of cross-border organizations and the driving force of what we have called the "frontier regions movement".<sup>14</sup>

*Other "internal frontier regions".* To this nucleus we can add the borderlands between France and Italy, also both original members of the European Communities, and those between the newer members. The situation here is, however, very diversified. The borderland between Germany and Denmark has been the seat of intense cross-border cooperative exchanges for a long time. On the other hand, the boundary between the Irish Republic and Ulster is one of the few officially disputed ones in the world, and the borderland in which one of the most active and bloody conflict still rages. The France-Spain boundary has two faces: the officially long-standing peaceful and cooperative relations, owing also to the presence of the same ethnic groups on both sides (Basques and Catalans); and the tensions and conflicts generated by the militant separatist groups. Then there are the borderlands between Spain and Portugal, about which little is known to the present writer; more light will be undoubtedly thrown in the near future, since Spain has volunteered to host the next European Conference of Frontier Regions.<sup>15</sup>

All these interior frontier regions of the European Community are placed in a perspective of ever closer and "more perfect" integration (economic, political,

cultural etc.) of the bordering countries.

But then there are other border situations, where the neighbouring countries belong to different political contexts, and have no immediate perspectives of formal "minging", although they may already be highly integrated in a number of aspects; and, finally, borders along countries of widely different socio-political orientation and structure. Such borderlands can be grouped as follows:

*Nordic Countries.* Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland have common borders, both territorial and maritime. They belong to different political alignments (Norway and Denmark belong to the NATO, Sweden is non-aligned, Finland has "special relations" with the USSR), but also have many historical cultural, economic and other things in common. They entertain a variety of good-neighbour policies, and numerous nuclei of "trans-frontier co-operations" can be detected, beginning in the far North, cross-border home of the nomadic Lapp pastoralists, and ending in the south, where the main problem is the management of common transport infrastructure in the Skagerrak and the Oresund. What characterizes these activities is their matter-of-factness, their lack of political rhetoric. This may have to do with national characters; or the lack for perspective or urges for degrees of political integration and union, beyond the present ones, which are already high enough, and apparently quite satisfactory for everyone concerned. These borderlands are object of excellent socio-geographical studies.<sup>16</sup>

*The Alpine Arc.* Two of the countries in this section, Switzerland and Austria, do not belong formally, either as a rational choice or because of external constraint, to the European society, economy, and culture. To the Alpine arc belongs also part of Yugoslavia, a socialist, one-party country. Of course, France and Italy also have Alpine borders. In this whole area, borderland cooperation is prompted by many factors—the presence of recognized national and ethnic minority groups (Italian vestiges in France, French Occidents and Franco-Provençals in Italy, Germans and Slovenes in Italy, Slovenes in Austria, Italians in Yugoslavia, etc.) common history and culture (Switzerland being a four-nationality country; large sections of the Eastern Alps being former provinces of the Hapsburg empire, etc.); common socio-economic problems, connected with the Alpine environment, and, finally, the need of a common management of transport infrastructure across the rugged Alpine ranges. Despite the different internal and foreign political reactions of their respective countries, border regions along the Alpine arc have along tradition of cooperative and trans-border organization.<sup>17</sup>

*Maritime-peripheral region.* Europe is a continent rich in islands and peninsulas, and these regions display some features in common with borderlands: essentially, their being peripheral with respect to national (and European) core areas. French Brittany and Sud-ouest, Italian mezzogiorno, Ireland, Cornwall and Scotland, and now some Iberic regions, belong in this category, in some context lumped together with other types of border regions (indeed the open sea is a certain type of border).

*Regions along the "Iron Curtain".* Europe harbours, along with the more open ones, also the most hermetically closed and "ugliest" of all boundaries: that between Western and Eastern Germany<sup>18</sup> the primacy being contested only by the frontier between North and South Korea. Also the Czechoslovakian borders with Western Germany and Austria are extremely tight. These borderlands are literally "with their backs to the wall" and have therefore special disadvantages. They are granted special assistance both by the concerned governments and the European

## Community.

*Eastern Europe.* Little is known to the present writer about the borderland situation in Eastern Europe. The impression is that basic conditions for the development of "frontier regions" in the Western sense are lacking. There are, for example, no autonomy of local community and social forces in prospects for a freely-chosen trans-national integration. Being forced to live in a supranational, coercive and economic context, Eastern countries are extremely jealous of their national identity, and of what little sovereignty they are left with.

A further characteristic, probably hindering trans-frontier cooperation, is that most Eastern Nation-states are, in a sense, very young, uncertain of their identity, and occupying partly new and disputed territories. It may be interesting to stress here that most Eastern European boundaries are much more "recent" and "artificial" than the African ones. Most Eastern countries harbour large minorities of different national and ethnic groups, and, when they have managed to form homogenous units, this has usually been done through extensive and painful population transfers, ruthless policies of assimilation and suppression of diversity, and substantial relocations of boundaries. All this has left heritage of ethnic-national problems which embitters, although usually only in a latent form, relations between the "brethren" in the Socialist camp. In other words the impression is that in Eastern countries border problems are still of the "old-fashioned" type, connected with nationalism, and territorial claims, and rife with potential conflicts. This is quite clear in the case of Hungarians in Rumania (Transylvania) and in the case of Bulgaria's claims over Macedonia belonging to Yugoslavia and its suppression policies towards the Turkish minority.<sup>19</sup>

## The Common Peculiarity of European Borders: "Openness" vs. "Porosity"

Beneath the variety of European border situation one finds, however, one common trait: all of them (with some very minor exception) are tightly controlled by the Central Governments. They may be more or less open or closed; by they are not "porous", if by this term is meant the spontaneous state of permeability, the inability of the states to regulate them! &

Effectively, Smuggling is certainly not unknown, especially in the case of light weight, easily concealable, high-value wares (e.g. drugs and currency); and illegal movement of persons, clandestine migration, is also present. But in comparison to the enormous amount of legal cross-border exchanges, the above do seem to amount to a tiny fraction, and also in absolute numbers there seems to be nothing to compare to some border situations in other parts of the world.

This hypothesizes peculiarity seems attributable to a number of reasons. One is the relative homogeneity between bordering countries: differentials in prices, wages, opportunities, standards of living, etc. are not as high among European countries as, for instance, the U.S.-Mexico case, where the richest and one of the poorest countries in the world meet or, as has been noted by Professor Astiwaju, the most spectacular land border between the First and the Third World.<sup>20</sup>

A second factor is probably the stronger grip of the State system on their citizens. Most of the European peoples have live under some sort of Central State for centuries, and are generally very state-conscious, law-abiding loyal citizens. There are (or rather were) cases of smuggling traditions, and even of a smuggling folk cultures, in some European border communities, especially in some remote mountain areas, or in some busy harbours like Naples (harbours, like airports, are a special type

of border-place). But in general, again, it can be maintained that these are marginal phenomena.

This factor is linked with two others. A stronger state tradition means usually a stronger State machinery for the control of boundaries. In fact, customs guards and border police are among the oldest State and military institutions: they are part and parcel of the European history and literature (Take just two examples: the *Three Musketeers* saga and Bizet's *Carmen*). In general, State services are in Europe highly organized and respected, deeply rooted in the consciousness as well as in the territories - "hard" in contrast with what G. Myrdal called the "softness" of many newer States. The administration of borders, their management and regulation, is firmly in the hands of central States; the technical machinery is, in general, quite effective.

Finally there is the geographical factor. Illegal border crossing is easier in places of high population density (because of the anonymity of urban crowds); or sparsely settled, remote, forested or busy, or otherwise rugged terrain. Many European boundaries, however, run through intensely cultivated and settled areas. All vehicular routes are controlled by border police, and strangers walking in the fields near boundary lines are liable to be quickly spotted and reported by the law abiding rural folks.

As we have said, however, the main reason of the relatively low (illegal) "porosity" of European borders is their high (legal) "openness" and the high homogeneity of neighbouring countries. Where, in Europe, there were important elements of differentiation (of political economic systems) and a low level of openness, as with the Eastern countries, the amount of clandestine passages could be quite high, so much as to require the well-known physical sealing of the borders with walls, barbed wire and mine fields.

## Three Models of Border Situations

What we have in mind in the above is, obviously, a comparison between African, the American and European border situation. It seems to us that they correspond to three general models or ideal-types, which can be arranged in a comparative-evolutionary scale, referring to three different stages of societal development. They can be labelled, respectively, the Nation-Building, The Coexistence, and the Integration models.

*Nation-building.* Nation-states of more recent origin have the paramount problem of internal integration, which also means a "hardening" of their boundaries. In order to function effectively, a system must, among other things, be able to control its relations with the environment; for a socio-political system, this means the ability to selectively filter inputs and outputs; (i.e. to control ever more finely its boundaries). Autonomy, self-sufficiency and sovereignty mean, first of all, the control over the inflow and outflow of persons, goods, energies, ideas. National "unity" and "homogeneity" entail differentiation from other societies. All this has clear implication for border areas. Once homogeneous areas are split by state boundaries, the fractions tend to develop along divergent paths, nurture different loyalties, languages, values, economies. This, of course, often means disintegration of older local unities, laceration of communities, and often intersocietal tensions and conflicts. African borders seem all too often to belong to this type.<sup>21</sup>

*Co-Existence.* In this case, the neighbouring nation-states may have already achieved some satisfactory degree of "systemness", (i.e. of internal integration).



They have no major problem of national identity. Their "functional" (cultural, political, economic etc.) boundaries, as well as their territorial ones, are undisputed. Because of their contiguity they have in any case what the economists call "externalities", (i.e. relations arising out of sheer spatial contact). They can choose a policy of "closure" (avoidance, disassociation, separation), and therefore inhibit all human "commerce" in the border areas; in some cases, they lay waste a strip of terrain ("no man's land"); in others, they build fences and walls. This co-existence may nevertheless be called peaceful, even if it is the peace of lifelessness. Relations between the two systems are carried out exclusively centre-to-centre. In this case, there is not much scope for border studies; other than those illustrating the marginalization of such areas.

In most cases, however, contiguous societies entertain some level of "neighbourliness"; people living in border areas are allowed some interaction across the boundary. The differences between the neighbouring societies, in fact, stimulates exchanges of many types. This is particularly so in the economic sphere, since the differences in price, quality and types of goods and services naturally promotes exchanges; but also cultural, political and generally social diversity has some effect of this kind.

Most commonly, borders between co-existing societies alternate closed segments (where passage is prohibited) and open ones, where passage is permitted in a regulated mode. Such alternation may occur also in time, and/or with reference to particular types of exchanges.

State policies in border areas may reflect predominantly the goals and interest of the society as a whole, as conceived by the central powers, or may take into account, to some extent, the interests of the border populations. The latter may even be granted some special statutes and facilities (for instance, easier passages, economic franchises and import permits, access to trans-border facilities). This, in effect, amounts to drawing "lesser" internal, functional and spatial boundaries around affected border regions.

The "peaceful co-existence" model seems by far the most common the world over. Most neighbouring states do allow some interaction at the borders, and do have some special arrangements to regulate them; many of them also have some kind of special policies for border areas and people. Because of its universality, and probable prevalence also in the future<sup>6</sup>, this model seems also the most interesting for scientific research and policy suggestions. The US-Mexico border seems a perfect instance of this model.

*Integration.* In this case, the neighbouring systems are steered towards ever higher degree of integration, of mutual interpenetration, of merging. States are willing to "devolve" their powers and surrender their sovereignties to higher and wider levels of societal organization. At their borders, what were walls and barriers evolve into doors, bridges and junctions; and these, in turn, may evolve into the new centres of the overall supra-system.

All this was very common in the past and is very well documented in history. Many frontier outposts developed into the core area of new civilizations. Buffer states—like Belgium and Switzerland—become continental and world centres. This is the kind of process sociologists like De Greef had in mind when they theorized about frontiers and boundaries.

### The Integrative Context of European Borders

Transnational integration is another name for what other sociologists used to call "ecological expansion" or "epigenesis of political communities", (i.e. the widening of societal horizons to bring about the growth of larger societies through the absorption of lesser ones, the spreading of organized, large-scale, ever more "civilized", and "modern" societies) (Etzioni). It seemed obvious, to classic social theorists, that this process would progress until the whole of mankind would form a single, unitary, integrated world society.

This is not the place to discuss this enormous issue.<sup>22</sup> World society does seem to be growing, but at a pace much slower than one hoped for (or feared), with growing dis-equilibria, and in forms often unexpected. New divisive and disintegrative forces have arisen, and the prospects for terminal catastrophes seem much closer than those for planetary integration. "Regional" unions at continental level are progressing at a disappointingly sluggish pace, if at all. The main drive seems to be, the world over, towards the strengthening and internal integration of state societies, and the hardening of boundaries between them.

The area where (sub-)continental regional union seems to have progressed more steadily, even though, for some, exasperatingly slowly, is Western Europe. There may well be other comparable cases, where the neighbouring countries are at a reasonably similar and advanced level of civilization, are wide-open to each other, and the levels of de-facto interpenetration and integration are even higher than in Europe; the US-Canada border cases comes immediately to mind. But there may be many more, in Latin America or elsewhere.

What is unique to Western Europe is that continental unity has become a widely shared value, a political ideology. The sociological spread and moral intensity of this ideology is certainly still limited, much too limited in our views; but we believe that it is stronger, in both relative and absolute terms, than in any other continent.

What is important in this "Europeanist" ideology is that, in its fullest expressions, it presupposes the "withering away", the overcoming of the nation-states. Europe, is, it seems to us, one of the few places in the world where the Nation State model of political organisation has lost much of its moral fascination in the heart of men, and where it is subject to manifold ideological attacks.

It was in Western Europe that nation-states were first invented, and it is only natural that here they first matured and, hopefully decayed.

Of course the state machinery is there, stronger than ever; the "Welfare State" is still bloating and extending, and practical, utilitarian nationalism is rampant. But state-nationalism, as the paramount social philosophy and moral force of the XIX Century has, we submit, grossly weakened. One of the main successor ideologies is European Unionism.

Again, the issue cannot be adequately dealt with here. We just want to emphasize that on the subject of regional integration Europe is ahead the situation in other continents such as, for example, North America is respect of the US-Canada case. We know of no socially and politically legitimate movement for the merging of those two states; as far as we know, nationalism is rampant there as in most other place in the world. We know of no US-Canada border local authorities battling in the interest of their communities by claiming the more perfect union between the two countries; we know of no "frontier region movements" as pressure groups for the merging of US and Canada.

In general, movements for trans and supra-national integration are quite weak

in the world outside western Europe, for a number of reasons. One of them is that, apparently in historical experience, the processes of "ecological expansion" and of integration of societies were always accompanied by the force of arms. It appears that political communities grow and unite only through wars of the threat thereof, and of course war has become a less and less socially acceptable mode of inter-social interaction. Thus, while some other forms of integration (communication, economy, etc.) may be progressing, legal-political integration is not. The formal international system has been generally "frozen" in the form shaped by the last World War: with the only difference that former colonies became new states, in the mould of the classic European model, and in the bounds traced by European colonial powers. Even in the most obvious cases of "ecological expansion" by war, as in the cases of Laos and Kampuchea in the Indo-Chinese peninsula, the forms have been respected. The world over, state boundaries (National Frontiers) are still utterly sacred and one of the main political concerns is to demarcate, sharpen, strengthen and harden them.

Only in Europe one hears of the need for "de-functionalizing", "Devaluing", overcoming, withering away of the boundaries, one hears of the Nation-state as an "obsolete" mode of societal organization, of the need to "efface" it towards higher levels (European union) and lower levels (local and regional communities); of frontier regions as "laboratories" for the experimentation of such new models of political organization, as points of saturation of old, painful wounds, of foci and spearheads of integrative processes; of borderland communities as miniature exemplars of the new, united Europe.

Admittedly, these feelings are still in the buds; they need much care and cultivation. But they are, we believe, the most advanced one can find the world over.

They have been grown out of the ashes of terrible wars, the Great European Civil war, 1915-1945, during which some European Nation States transmogrified into militaristic, totalitarian monsters, and it took the efforts of the whole world to destroy them. The drive for European Union is nourished by the memories of this tragedy and the determination that it should never, never happen again; and that the merging of European Nations is a common political system was the best safeguard.

History does not repeat itself. We hope that trans-national unions, in other continents, will be grounded on other bases than the immense heaps of rubble and corpses we had in Europe. But we also hope that the European experience, in the field of overcoming state-nationalism and alleviating the problems of border people, can be of some inspiration also elsewhere, so that European horrors will not be replicated.

### Conclusion: Some Principles of the Theory of Borders

It is in this spirit that we should like to end this sketch of the European experience by recalling some of the principles that can be distilled from the European literature, both "traditional" and modern, on border problems.<sup>23</sup>

- a) The first is that *all boundaries are artificial*. They are human impositions on the continuous tissue of nature. Boundaries can be old or recent, accepted or disputed, already impressed on the landscape or cutting through still homogeneous landscape and so on. African boundaries, for instance, are in no way more artificial than European or other boundaries.
- b) The second is that *boundaries are essential part of every system (or thing)*. Nothing can exist (i.e., "stand-out") unless it is somehow bounded, differen-

tiated from its background or environment. To make boundaries "wither away" is tantamount to a wish to dissolve the system into non-existence. Boundary-maintaining is one of the basic functions of all living systems, from macromolecules to international communities. *Boundaries are needed to protect diversity*.

c) *Most systems have two kinds of boundaries*: Spatial and functional, and there are relations between them.

d) *Spatial boundaries have ambiguous features*: they divide and unite, bind the interior and link it with the exterior, are barriers and junctions, walls and doors, organs of defence and of attack and so on. Frontier areas (borderlands) can be managed so as to maximize either of such functions. They can be militarized, as bulwarks against neighbours, or made into areas of peaceful interchange.

e) There are three main kinds of border situations: the "frontier" (open, expansive, dynamic, attractive, rich); the "periphery" (closed, static, stagnant, repulsive, poor); and the "bridge" (open, active, attractive, rich). In the modern world, all space has been partitioned among nation-states, and there is no more place for "classic" frontiers; they have been metaphorized in economic and symbolic terms. Periphery is the standard situation in closed, centralized societal systems, unless effective policies of regional equilibria are implemented. Bridges occur at the point of junction between any two societal, partly-open systems.

f) *Borderlands are usually different from core (central, interior) areas, and have some commonalities with "sister" borderlands across the boundary*. This arises from a great variety of factors. One of them is that usually boundaries cut across homogeneous cultural areas, and create minorities. The second is their distance (spatial, social, etc.) from the respective cores. A third is the dependency of their economies on the border policy decision made at the centre. A fourth is the similarity of functions (e.g. military or economic). A fifth is the occurrence of economic integrations (e.g. cross-border commerce, industrial plants, etc.). A sixth is their physical contiguity (need for joint infrastructural planning, environmental management, etc.) and so forth.

g) *Spatial justice require that border people be not handicapped, in their daily lives, by their location*. Governments should take into account the disadvantages (as well as the advantages), of living in the borderlands, and adopt adequate special policies to redress the imbalances. This usually means granting border regions a number of special statuses and aids.

h) *Daily lives of local communities in border areas often require interaction and cooperation with people across the border*. Local authorities should be granted the autonomous powers to do so, and even enter into legal obligations and formal organizations with their counterparts across the border. *Neighbouring relations between border communities are not international relations*. An experiment in this direction has been made within the Council of Europe with the "outline convention on trans-frontier cooperation", signed by many states.<sup>19</sup>

i) *Relations between border people should be managed so as to maintain a sense of friendliness and common humanity*, because borderlands are one of the potential or actual "foci" of trans-national integration, and thus of pan-human solidarity.

## Endnotes

1. The present author has done something of the sort for his own border region, Friuli: see e.g. R. Strassoldo, B. Cattarini (eds), *Friuli, la provvidenza del terremoto* (Milano: Angeli, 1978); R. Strassoldo, *Friuli-Venezia Giulia, a border region*, in VV.AA., *Regionalism in Europe* (München: Interreg, 1981); R. Strassoldo, "Regionalism and Ethnicity—The Case of Friuli," *Int. Political Science Review*, 6, 2, 1985.
2. A good example of such studies is F. Lantier, *La frontiere Franco-Belge, Etude géographique des effets d'une frontière internationale sur la vie des relations* (Lille, 1974). Extensive bibliographies can be found in the already classic books by Prescott, *The Geography of Frontiers and Boundaries*, (Chicago: Aldine, 1965) and of P. Guichonnet and C. Raffestin, *Géographie des frontières* (Paris: PUF, 1979).
3. The references here could be legion, covering the whole of political-geography literature, and many international-law studies. A study trying to develop an interdisciplinary approach to a "science of boundaries" (or limology, from lat. *limes*=limit) is H. Dorton, *La Frontière Québec-Terranova* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1963). There are also historical and comparative studies of border disputes, like S. Tagli, *Studying Boundary Conflicts: A Theoretical Framework* (Stockholm: Esselte, 1977). A case study employing a sociological, comparative, anthropological and historical approach is that of F. Gross, *Ethnicity in a Borderland, An Inquiry into the Nature of Ethnicity and Reduction of Ethnic Tensions in a One-time Genocide Area*, (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 1978).
4. G. DeGreef, *Théorie des frontières et des classes*, (Brussels: Larcier, 1908).
5. L.W. Lyde, *Some Frontiers of Tomorrow—An Aspiration for Europe*, (London: Black, 1915).
6. The environmental issue has grown as one of the most burning ones in trans-frontier affairs. A larger and larger part of transfrontier contacts and organizations revolve around it, and also official international organizations, like the EEC and most notably the OCDE, have been active and effective in this field. See e.g. OCDE, *Problems in Transfrontier Pollution*, (Paris: OCDE, 1974). A very good overview of the issue (without scholarly apparatus of references, however) has been presented at the Borken Conference (1984) by J.M. Woehring, director of the European Affairs at the French Ministry for the Environment.
7. The best "manifestoes" of such a doctrine issue from the European Cultural Centre and the European University Institute of Geneva, both animated by Denis de Rougemont. His thought, synthesizing federalist, regionalist and environmentalist theories (along with many others) has been summarized in *L'aventur est notre affaire*, (Paris: Stock, 1977) and has enjoyed a wide popularity, having been translated into six languages. It has also been the object of seminars and ensuing "satellite" publications, like G. De Puynege (ed) *Autour de "L'aventur est notre affaire"* (Lussane, Charles Veillon, 1984).
8. The terminological issues are rather thorny and probably insoluble, due to the interference of several linguistic traditions, even within what is officially English. Many authors have discussed the differences between "borders", "boundaries" and "frontiers" and the several, sometimes confusing, connotations of each term. It seems that "international English", under the American influence, prefers the terms border and borderland, while the English used in continental Europe more often uses the term "frontier regions" under the influence of French, where there are almost no alternatives to "region frontiere" or "region frontalière" (the terms *limite*, *borne* are much rarer).
9. The leading expert here is C. Ricq of the Geneva Institutes mentioned above and Geneva University, author of several highly valuable studies on the subject; the latest one having been presented at the Borken conference. See also his full-scale book, *Les travailleurs frontaliers in Europe* (Paris: Anthropos, 1981).
10. Pioneer in this field, in addition to the Geneva centre, has been the University of Bruxelles, which in 1969 organized a seminar whose proceedings were published a year later under the editorship of P. Romsus with the title *Les régions frontalières et l'Heure du Marché Commun* (Bruxelles: Presses Universitaires, 1970). In 1972 the Gorizia seminar took place; the proceedings were edited by the present writer in a multi-lingual book with the title *Boundaries and Regions: The Peace and Growth Potential of Border Regions* (Trieste: Lint, 1973). Among the later ones, we can mention the 2nd Gorizia Conference, held in 1979, with two books of proceedings in English, R. Strassoldo, G. Delli Zotti (eds), *Cooperation and Conflict in Border Areas* (Milano: Angeli, 1982); and B. De Marchi, A.M. Boileau, *Boundaries and Minorities in Western Europe* (Milano: Angeli, 1982). An important seminar was held at the European University Institute in Florence 1981; the proceedings have been edited by M. Anderson, of the Univ. of Edinburgh, and published by Frank Cass, London, first as a special issue of the "Journal of West European Politics" 5, 4, Oct. 1982, and then as a free-standing volume.
11. A pioneer effort by R. Gübert on the Italian-Yugoslav border, *La situazione confinaria* (Trieste: Lint, 1972) has been left without noticeable followers. Many surveys and other types of sociological analyses have been conducted in many other border areas, but usually with less theoretical and systematic ambitions. No comparative research has been done, to our knowledge.
12. This is the sensation one sometimes gathers in the perusal of papers presented at the various "frontier regions" conferences, specially those of a more "political" character, and the materials gathered by the Council of Europe. These are often collections of official records and press releases of official meetings of local authorities; it is often difficult to understand what the sociological and behavioural substance is, beneath the rhetoric.
13. The most scrupulous analysis of European cross-border organizations is V. von Malchus, author of a cumulative row of papers on the topic. See e.g. his *Partnerschaft an Europäischen Grenzen, Integration Durch grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit* (Bonn: Inst. für Europäischen Politik, 1975); idem, "Bilanz und Perspektiven der Institutionelle Entwicklung grenzüberschreitender Zusammenarbeit in Europa" paper presented at the 3rd Meeting of European Frontier Regions, Borken (W. Germany) 1984.
14. Most of the regions in this borderland have an umbrella joint organization, called Association of the European Frontier Regions (ARFE), which is heavily German. Also the official name is German, according to the charter (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Europäische Grenzregionen, AGEGR).
15. The preceding ones have been held, under the auspices of the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg (1972) and in Innsbruck (1975) and, as mentioned, in Borken (1984).
16. For inst. see T. Lundén, *Individual Spatial Behaviour in a Boundary Area* (in Swedish with English summary) (Inst. of Geography, Univ. of Stockholm, 1973).
17. The meetings and the literature on border cooperation in the Alpine Arc are numerous. A very large-scale meeting was held in Milan in 1973; its proceedings have been published in three volumes (in Italian) as *Le Alpi e l'Europa* (Bari: Laterza, 1975). A second meeting on the same scale has been held in Lugano, March 1985. Individual transfrontier regions in this area are very active; among the best organized seem the "Community of the Central Alps" (ARGE ALP) joining German Bavaria, Austrian Tyrol and Vorarlberg, Italian South Tyrol, Trentino, Veneto and Lombardy. At the eastern extreme of the arc we find the Community of the Regions of ALPE-ADRIA, with the Italian regions of Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Veneto, Austrian Styria, Carinthia, Low-Austria and Salzburg, and the Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Croatia. Memberships in such organizations are somewhat confusing, since multiple memberships are allowed. There are differences between "full" member and "observer" status, and all can be easily altered from session to session. These organizations are usually very productive in glossy brochures and planning documents.
18. German planning departments are richly documented about the plight of such areas. They have also been the object of a study by D. Shears, *The Ugly Frontier* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1970).
19. One example of such border-ethnic problem study is P.R. Magocsi, *The Shaping of a National Identity, Sub-Carpathian Rus, 1848-1948* (Boston: Harvard Univ. Press, 1978). A collection of studies of the Eastern situation, with a focus on the problems of ethnic and national minorities, can be found in A.A.V.V., *Regionalism in Europe* (München: Interreg, 1981), cit. A socio-economic study of the effects of Poland's post-war boundaries has been done by A. Kruszwski, *The Oder-Neisse Boundary and Poland's Modernization* (New York: Praeger, 1972).
20. A.I. Asiwaju, *Borderlands Research: A Comparative Perspective* (El Paso: Center for Inter-American and Border Studies, Univ. of Texas at El Paso, 1983).
21. The literature on African boundaries has recently been enriched by the study edited by Prof. Asiwaju, *Partitioned Africans, Ethnic Relations Across Africa's International Boundaries, 1884-1984* (London: Hurst and Univ. of Lagos Press, 1984).
22. Suffice it to refer to the literature on international politics (or, better, the "interior politics of the Planet Earth"), international relations and international sociology, variously called. I have tried to explore such issues in several other papers and books, and especially in *Temi di sociologia delle relazioni internazionali* (Gorizia: ISIG, 1979), where extensive references can also be found.
23. The following principles are a distillation of several writings of the present author, in turn based on rather extensive, multidisciplinary readings on the general issues of boundaries. The most detailed and complete study can be found on the book cited above, Chapter 3 ("La teoria dei confini"); the most synthetic and "philosophic" one to date is *Boundaries in Sociological Theory, A Reassessment*, in R. Strassoldo, G. Delli Zotti (eds), *op. cit.*