

## History, Borders and the Borderlands

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Under current dialectical conditions of globalization and increased demands for security, borders are no longer just symbols of sovereignty and national histories; they are evolving into new forms and as such are taking on new functions. Yet while borders continue to exist and are arguably more fluid and dynamic than ever before, this doesn't mean that borders prior to the current phase of globalization (1945 onwards) were relatively static and stable. *What is constant is the fact that borders are always in a state of becoming* and in this context, we need to address the relationship that exists between borderland evolution and the changing forces of globalization. Set against this background of dynamic change, the Historical Theme component of BIG operates from the basic principle that while history is 'messy', it is, as many theorists (e.g. Paasi, n.d.; Ackleson, 2000; O'Dowd, 2010) have argued, absolutely necessary in any consideration of borders and borderlands, including those shared by Canada and the United States. Like borders, borderlands also must be situated in their *temporal and geographical contexts* in order to investigate the relations between territory, identity and sovereignty. The major research areas include: the evolution of the Canadian-American borderlands; borders, borderlands and globalization; and aboriginal borderlands.

This presentation focuses primarily on the the evolution of the Canadian-American borderlands. In particular, I will discuss briefly the relevance of borderland theory to the historical investigation of the Canadian-American borderlands and the asymmetrical character of these borderlands. In addition, I will explain briefly how an approach I call spatial grammar, with its inherent syntax composed of postmodernism, space-time compression, and the deterritorialization/reterritorialization paradox of globalization, serve as a major foundation for the work that I do.