

Environmental Cross-Border Regions and the Canada-U.S. Relationship: Building from the Bottom-Up in the Second Century?

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Research Orientation

- Subnational gov'ts have adopted central roles in Canada-U.S. transboundary environmental governance
 - growing case study literature
- □ Proposition → reorientation of Canada-U.S. environmental relationship from bottom-up, from bilateral (nation-nation) into primarily cross-border regional (subnational) phenomenon?



Three Empirical Questions

- □ Is the Canada-U.S. relationship now comprised of a series of environmental cross-border regions (ECBRs), with distinct boundaries?
- □ Are ECBRs capable of autonomous action, i.e., articulating and acting on regional goals?
- □ Are ECBRs capable of having a meaningful impact on policy?
 - → requires a 'whole-of-border' approach



Empirical Basis

- □ Academic Advisor, "Emergence of Cross-Border Regions" Project, Policy Research Initiative, Government of Canada (Leader Survey 2005-6)
- □ VanNijnatten (2006): Database of State-Province Linkages
- □ VanNijnatten & Boychuk (2006): Mercury Policy Diffusion at Subnational Level
- □ Healy and VanNijnatten (2007-8): Transboundary Environmental Cooperation in North America



Question #1: Are there environmental cross-border regions?



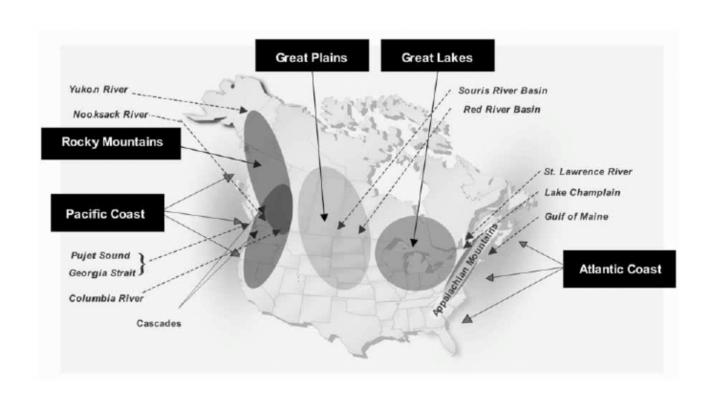








Shared Ecological Features





Emergence of Cross-Border Regions Project (Policy Research Initiative, 2006)

Based on "economic and organizational cooperative linkages" as well as cultural/value similarities... cross-border regions are a primarily subnational, regional phenomenon, composed of "different states and provinces straddling the US-Canada border"

→ found 4 major CBRs



Alberta and Montana are part of both the West and the Prairies-Great Plains cross-border regions. In the East, New Hampshire and Maine are part of the two cross-border sub-regions for Quebec and Atlantic Canada.



PRI Leader Survey Factors in Defining CBRs

Factor	Northeast	Great Lakes	Prairies-Great Plains	West
Shared Ecosystems	55%	81%	75%	75%
Locational Factors	79%	95%	100%	89%
Economic Exchanges	76%	95%	100%	89%
Cultural Similarities	28%	14%	8%	17%
Historical Links	52%	43%	42%	26%



Verbatim Comments...

- "A CBR should be defined by its 'environmental reach'."
- "The physical presence of the watershed is key."
- □ "The West CBR is tied by the shared... Puget Sound/Georgia Basin watershed/airshed."
- "Environmental factors define the boundaries of the Northeast region... this is a cross-border region which shares an environmental strategy based on the reality of cooperation to deal with shared environmental issues."



Formal Linkages Increasing at Subnational Level (since 1980)

BC-WA	22	450%	QB-VT	12	100%
ON-MI	17	240%	NB-ME	12	100%
ON-MN	16	220%	AB-MT	11	175%
QB-NY	15	275%	AB-ID	11	267%
BC-ID	13	225%	QC-PA	11	267%
BC-OR	13	225%	ON-IN	11	120%
ON-NY	13	160%	ON-IL	11	120%
ON-OH	13	160%	AB-WA	11	267%
ON-PA	13	117%	BC-MT	11	267%
ON-WI	13	225%	BC-CA	11	175%

VanNijnatten, 2006

^{*} Linkages: mechanisms setting forth procedures and conditions for regularized interactions in a formalized manner by means of jointly signed documentation, incorporation of interactions into jurisdictional operating procedures and budget, or the establishment of identifiable institutions attached to resources and personnel.



Region	Index of Linkages (avg # of linkages per possible pair)	Index of Bilaterality (Ratio of Bilateral to Multilateral Agreements)
New England Provinces: NB, NS, PEI, NL States: NH, VT, ME, MA, CT, RI	7.1	.49
Great Lakes Provinces: ON States: NY, PA, OH, MI, IN, IL, WI, MN	13.25	1.05
Prairies/Plains Provinces: MB, SK, AB States: WI, MN, ND, MT	5.5	.54
Pacific Northwest Provinces: BC, AB States: WA, OR, ID, CA, AL	8.5	1.24

[•]The index of linkages is calculated as total linkages divided by the product of the number of provinces in the region multiplied by the number of states in the region.

[•]The index of bilaterality is calculated as the number of bilateral agreements divided by the number of multilateral agreements.



Environmental CBRs?

- ☐ 3 core ECBRs
 - Pacific Northwest: BC, AB, WA, ID, OR, MT;
 - Great Lakes-Heartland: ON, MN, MI, NY, IL, IN, OH, WI, PA
 - New England: QB, four Maritime provinces and VT, ME, NH, MA, RI, CT
- □ Plus 3 sub-regions
 - Québec-Northern New England (New York and Vermont)
 - Manitoba, Minnesota, North Dakota
 - Alberta, Montana, Idaho



Thus, ECBRs are developing along border, have boundaries that are firm enough to identify core membership but flexible enough to incorporate other relationships depending on issue.



Question #2: Are environmental CBRs capable of autonomous action?











Factors supporting autonomous action...

- □ Regional goals?
 - 'hard' or 'soft' (specificity, scope, accountability)
 - □ NB. implementation purely domestic
- Maturity of governance institutions
- □ Functional capability
 - horizontal, vertical networking
- Availability of resources



New England ECBR

- □ Harder goals backed up by concrete timelines and reporting requirements
- □ Shared institutions are mature and regionally integrative; exhibit some vertical capacity and horizontal capacity through sophisticated committee systems; show higher level of policy ambition
- □ Relatively successful in getting federal and CEC funding for projects



Great Lakes ECBR

- □ Dominant feature is fragmentation no regionally integrative framework
- □ Complex array of organizations; some mature; many are sophisticated and exhibit governance capacity; have experience with horizontal and vertical networking
- □ Two major complicating factors: tendency toward bilateralism, much larger federal presence



Pacific Northwest ECBR

- Institutions less mature; less elaborate (exception: PNWER); vertical and horizontal capacity is developing (federal presence also strong)
- □ Initiatives have less specific goals, are more management-oriented



Question #3: Do environmental CBRs have a meaningful policy impact?











Measuring Impact

- □ Policy goals
 - evidence of goal convergence in ECBRs
 - □ issue framing and goal formulation increasingly transboundary
- Policy instrument choice
 - very little research, limited evidence of 'creeping' convergence, e.g., mercury reduction policy (US influence)
- Policy outcomes
 - evidence? e.g., reductions reported under NEF/ECP action plans



A Few Thoughts...

- Subnational, cross-border environmental governance is new reality
 - more decentralized governance regime for new century!
- □ Success has been achieved because of activities 'under the political radar'
 - quiet role of mezzo-level officials undergirded by political endorsement, and often federal support (!)



Thoughts (cont'd)

- But, asymmetries among ECBRs in terms of capacity for autonomous action
 - Do we need to address this? How?
 - What does this mean for environmental outcomes? e.g., climate change



Mercury Policy Similarity (VanNijnatten & Boychuk, 2006)

	SCORE /27	AVG. % SIMILARITY
PACIFIC	7.7	49
PRAIRIES-PLAINS	5.3	26
GREAT LAKES	5.3	23
NORTHEAST	12.4	36
NEW ENGLAND	13.8	43
WESTERN	2.7	22
ATLANTIC	4.5	36
ALL PROVS	4	28