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Jean-Paul Lacasse et Raimondo Strassoldo

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LES ACTES DU COLLOQUE PROBLEMI E PROSPETTIVE DELLE REGIONI DI FRONTIERA

Gorizia, Mars 1972

ISTITUTO DI SOCIOLOGIA INTERNAZIONALE DI GORIZIA (1973) *Confini e regioni/Boundaries and Regions*, Atti del convegno « Problemi e prospettive delle regioni di frontiera » (Gorizia, 24-27/3/1972). Trieste, Edizioni Lint. 496 pages.

Ce livre constitue sans doute l'ouvrage contemporain le plus important qui ait été publié dans le domaine des frontières et, à maints égards, il dépasse de loin tout ce qui a été écrit sur le sujet. Il reprend les textes des 34 communications qui ont été présentées lors de la Conférence tenue à Gorizia, à la frontière italo-yougoslave, en mars 1972 et portant sur les problèmes et les perspectives des régions frontalières. S'y ajoutent un intéressant avant-propos de Raimondo Strassoldo, directeur de l'Institut de Gorizia, les discours d'ouverture, le compte rendu de certaines interventions et divers renseignements relatifs au colloque et à ses participants, le tout dans un texte serré de près de 500 pages agrémentées de plusieurs cartes, tableaux et diagrammes.

L'excellent avant-propos de R. Strassoldo analyse, de façon synthétique, les textes des diverses communications tout en expliquant le sens et la portée. Suivent les textes eux-mêmes, dans la langue de leur présentation et ensuite, deux courts résumés de chacun, l'un en langue italienne, l'autre soit en anglais soit en français.

Il n'est pas inutile, ne serait-ce que pour montrer la variété des problèmes étudiés, de donner une table détaillée des diverses communications contenues dans cet ouvrage, d'autant plus que, s'il fallait exprimer un reproche aux responsables de l'édition, il faudrait souligner l'absence de table des matières.

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Il est évident que ce type d'ouvrage a ses limites et qu'il risque de pécher par manque de calibrage puisque tributaire des optiques particulières abordées par les personnes participant au colloque. Cela ne diminue en rien la valeur de l'ouvrage mais il faut quand même signaler qu'une telle situation a pour conséquence que les divers textes, malgré leur nombre et leur importance, ne couvrent pas tout le champ des « Problemi et prospettive delle regioni di frontiera ». Ainsi, à titre d'exemple, les rapports entre les frontières et la désignation de l'espace, ou encore les décalages entre la frontière stable et son assiette instable lorsqu'elle se situe, par exemple, au milieu d'une rivière où la géomorphologie est active, ne sont pas abordés. Hâtons-nous de signaler, cependant, que le colloque de Gorizia ne portait pas uniquement sur la géographie des régions frontière et que, de toute façon, la servitude mentionnée plus haut ne minimise d'aucune façon la valeur, l'importance et l'intérêt des divers textes et, partant, de l'ouvrage lui-même.

La multiplicité et la variété des thèmes évoqués dans cet ouvrage ainsi que le nombre et l'importance des questions qu'il soulève font qu'il doit être considéré comme un « classique » dans le domaine des frontières. Nous avons signalé l'absence de table des matières ; déplorons aussi l'absence d'index alphabétique des problèmes et lieux étudiés. Mais il n'en demeure pas moins que ce livre constitue un outil de travail extrêmement utile pour tous ceux qui s'intéressent à la limologie ou science des frontières. Cet intéressant ouvrage publié par l'Institut de sociologie internationale de Gorizia est indispensable, peut-être plus que tout autre, pour une bonne compréhension des problèmes des régions frontière.

La présentation signée par l'organisateur de la Conférence de Gorizia, le professeur Raimondo Strassoldo, constitue une si précieuse synthèse de l'ouvrage que nous avons cru utile de la reproduire ici avec l'autorisation de son auteur : nous en remercions monsieur Strassoldo.

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BOUNDARIES AND REGIONS

More than 35 papers were read at the Conference on « Problems and Perspectives of Border Regions », Gorizia, March 24-27, 1972 ; and the discussions were often prolonged and heated. This volume tries to strike a balance between the requirements of a formal record of what happened and the ambition to produce a readable book.

The working languages were three : Italian, English and French. Some relevant papers were in German, although orally presented in one of the other languages. But the maintenance of the three-languages rule would have made this volume too cumbersome. Thus, in accordance with the language policy of the Institute of International Sociology, which since its foundation has opted for English as its second language, we had to drop French in the « editorial » sections.

Some items of information and speeches were, perhaps arbitrarily deemed of only « internal » interest, and thus no effort was made to replicate them in the second language.

All papers are published in their original language ; each is accompanied by two summaries, one in Italian, the other either in English or in French.

The organization of the material follows closely the actual proceedings of the Conference. To the three main themes proposed to the participants (1. Boundaries, exchanges, development and interregional planning ; 2. Boundaries, conflict, integration and international peace ; 3. Boundaries, peoples and cultures) two sections have been added : an « introductory » and a « legal » one. Moreover, the three « themes », corresponding to the sessions of the Conference, have been subdivided into smaller groups of papers.

1. Introduction to the study of boundaries

The three papers collected under this heading present three points of view or, perhaps, three « stages » in the study of the boundary. Feliciano Benvenuti represents the lawyer interested in the human substance underlying the conceptual-normative structure, and in the historical process from which today's situation results. He stresses the difference between personal and impersonal legal systems, showing that the concept of territorial frontier is peculiar to the latter arrangement ; which is by no means universal or eternal. Franco Demarchi outlines the origins and growth of the sociological study of border phenomena, emphasizing the intellectual threads that converged in the establishment of an Institute specializing in such studies. He presents here the main activities and projects of the ISIG in this rather novel area of sociological inquiry which he has pioneered in Italy. Raimondo Strassoldo and Renzo Gubert elaborate on the theoretical, methodological and practical implications of the study of boundaries, drawing from a large

body of literature in the social and related sciences, and emphasizing the need for a « systems approach » to the subject. This essay is a thoroughly revised version of the « background paper », which was circulated among the scholars invited to the Conference, and it has been integrated with elements of other writings by the authors. It can be considered — for the time-being — the more advanced theoretical output of the Gorizia Institute.

2. *Boundaries, exchanges, planning and development : from the geographical to the systems approach*

This section has been subdivided into three headings : i. Case studies ; ii. Cross-Frontier exchanges and relations in two European areas ; iii. Boundaries and systems. The unifying criterion of this group is the interest these authors show regarding the problems of socio-economic development, and are ordered according to the gradual widening of the examined area : from the boundary line described by Valussi to the single frontier regions, from international regions to the planet as a whole, which is the object of Landheers' reflexions. In the same way there is a sort of transition from minute analysis to grand speculation from that most « concrete » of sciences, geography, to the most abstract one, « Systems Theory ».

The papers in the first group are, in most cases, the work of geographers. They show a keen awareness of the socio-economic phenomena of the areas they describe ; some of them have an outright normative orientation, through which social geography becomes a planning discipline. This is particularly true for the papers by Sevrin, Reboud, Raffestin, Klemenčič-Jeršič papers. Valussi remains within the traditional descriptive geographical method. Lunden's paper, on the other side, is particularly interesting as a specimen of the Swedish school of social geography, displaying the highest methodological sophistication in data-gathering. At this level, geography clearly is a social science - the first social science, as Karl Mannheim noted. The paper by Emidio Sussi represents another approach to the border phenomenon : the analysis of « public events » as recorded by the press. It is a simple model of what could be done on a larger scale, if the « emergence » of other « trans-frontier regions » is to be measured. In this case, the limited area studied rather than the disciplinary or methodological approach justifies the inclusion in this group. Finally, the work of Dorion and Lacasse, with its complexity and sophistication, largely transcends the limits of the Québec case to become an impressive example of the richness of the substance that can be organically tackled by the students of borders.

The following subsection features only two papers, dealing with the two areas more strategic to the Gorizia Institute : Western and South-Eastern Europe. The paper by von Malchus is an early version of a study sponsored by the Council of Europe ; the first wide-ranging, well-researched analysis of cooperation among Western European border communities.

Based primarily on documentary source, it provides a firm framework for further studies employing more « behavioral » methodologies. The ample study conducted by Kurt Wessely on transactions among the Balkan States offers a different vision : political difficulties and scant economic interdependence give little scope to cross-border exchanges, and administrative centralization does not play in favor of the growth of border regions in the Comecon countries.

The third subsection, « Boundaries and System », groups some papers which treat the problem of boundaries from a more theoretical-systematic, and even systemic, point of view. Franz Heigl uses some evidence from Austrian and German situations to substantiate a mathematical formulation of the role of boundaries in the settlement structure ; he also extrapolates some generalizations on the régional-science approach to border problems.

In a very dense paper, Teune and Mlinar place the boundary problem in the more general theme of « open systems ». They generate a careful taxonomy based on a systems approach to the problems of regions that want to optimize both development and openness. In this paper the old distinctions between social, economic and political development are finally overcome in a unified conceptual framework. The high level of generalization on which they move is not without clear practical implications, which are spelled out at the end of the paper.

Bernard Guillemain also adopts the language of systems in a review of the role of linear boundaries in some historical instances. He also emphasizes their importance in the « mental maps » of urban populations.

In a short but most suggestive paper, Bart Landheer finally weaves together some of the basic issues of our time around the conceptual pair « vertical and horizontal boundaries ». The evolution of Nation States, the dynamics of the international system, structural vs. linear thinking, the « limits to growth », the taming of achievement-oriented capitalism into a guided, stability-oriented society ; these are some of the main themes packed in an astounding intellectual feat, whose development and exegesis would keep one busy for a long time.

3. *Boundaries and sovereignty : the legal approach*

These papers have rather different contents ; what ties them together is their unmistakable legal approach, and the use of the concept of sovereignty as the main correlate of the boundary concept. Peterin deals with the evolution of sovereignty from a « real » right, analogous to property, to a procedural rule, tied not with impossible independence, but with equality of opportunity, with participation in the growth of a balanced trans-national system. Conetti emphasizes the strict adherence to the National Sovereignty idea in the international behavior of Eastern-European countries, here studied in reference to their cooperation for the exploitation of frontier

waters. Fiorio notes the hindrance posed by the same idea in the international cooperation for the protection of the maritime environment. Keijser, a World Unionist, states that the overcoming of national frontiers will be possible only if and when people will switch their allegiance — and grant sovereign powers — to another, higher agency better suited to secure protection.

4. *Boundaries, conflict, integration and peace : the political approach*

This section is made up of two parts. The first is more programmatic and methodological ; the second more substantive, touching on concrete, even if disparate, problems. Feliks Gross is a political sociologist very sensitive to the historical dimension ; Sven Tägil a historian with a characteristic systematic, comparative bent. The first proposes a typology of borders and border conflicts, and suggests the launching of a systematic long-range research program in this area. The second illustrates a comparative study on European and African boundaries his task force at Lund University is actually carrying on.

In a provocative paper, Marion Mushkat opens the next subsection, headed « War, Boundaries and Nation States ». Among other things Mushkat argues for the legitimacy of population transfer, when there is no other means of solving a border dispute ; and recalls the massive transfers that occurred in Europe after the two World wars, and that have been sanctioned by public opinion and international lawyers alike ; but he carefully distinguishes territorial ambitions from the aspiration to safe borders. The Middle East conflict also predominates in the « associative thinking » advocated by Ben-Dak ; hitting the central problem of the Conference, he concretely proposes for border regions a reversal of historical magnitude in their role : from a « military dominated societal setting » to a pawn of peace ; from a place of separation to one of exchange. In a review of the relevant literature, he emphasizes the blindness of most political scientists to such a treatment of the border problem.

The last paper of the group would have deserved a section for itself, if breadth, depth and richness were a criterion. It has been placed here because it basically deals with the antinomy State-International system, which is a topical political problem ; but it elaborates on concepts like aggression and repression, which give it a peculiar psychological slant. The failure of international organizations to rally the allegiance of people — even of their own fonctionnaires — is seen as rooted in the need for a sharp distinction between « inside » and « outside » ; a need which in its turn is rooted in the mechanisms of a repressive civilization. In this view it is not difficult to explain the taboo cast on the national frontier.

5. *Boundaries, people and cultures : The sociological approach*

The last section comprises two groups of papers. One is centered on a particular border region, Friuli Venezia-Giulia ; the other is more heterogeneous.

The papers by Strassoldo and Gubert summarize two of the studies carried out by the Gorizia Institute. Though dealing with closely related problems, they employ different techniques. The first is based on documentation, participation and élite interviewing ; the second is a survey of a sample of 1,215 subjects. The first is rather wide-ranging and sports a « normative » section, speculating on the different possible evolutionary trajectories of the relations between military and civilian authorities in a border region ; the other sticks very carefully to the data gathered through questionnaires and limits itself to a series of « hypotheses » on the relations between the several « factors of the border situation ». There is, however, some practical suggestion. Strassoldo's paper, dealing with the contrasting requirements of « regional development and national defense », was meant as a bridge between the first session of the Conference, dedicated to geographical and economic problems, and the second, reserved for the political and military ones. By the same token, Gubert's study stood as a transition between the papers related to military and political questions and the next section, where different boundary phenomena were thrown together, tied more by the general sociological-ethnological approach than by the content. Alberto Raffaelli reports the findings of some standard authoritarianism and anomie scales administered to some groups in the province of Udine. A fine example of historical sociology, presented by Oleg Mandić, traces the evolution of that peculiar institution, the « Military Borders » established by the Hapsburg emperors in Croatia at the beginning of the XVII Century, first as a bulwark against the Turks and then as a source of manpower for their armies. The social, legal and economic characters of this institution are carefully followed up to its elimination in the late XIX Century.

The last three papers examine the relevance of the concept of boundary in quite different contexts. Stahl notes that ancient frontiers left their mark on traditional rural cultures, and their study is a sort of « social archeology » ; he also points out some conditions limiting their effects. Guaraldo focuses on the mobility of pastoral cultures, which contributes to the « blurredness » of many frontiers. Benjamin B. Ringer inquires into the problems of multiple ethnicity, quite common in border areas, and also on the « ethnic boundary » that keeps one group different and separate from the others.

Besides the papers, the Conference was enriched by a wealth of discussions and interventions. Obviously only a few of them could be housed in this already crowded structure. An inevitable degree of arbitrariness went into the selection, of which this editor takes, per force, full responsibility.

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