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Canada–US Border Communities: What the People Have to Say

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Introduction

The search for understanding borderlands is often portrayed within the fabric of social and cultural discourses. As Eeva-Kaisa Prokkola submits, “borders are not located merely in the context of actual physical borderlines, but also in wider social and cultural processes and institutions” (2009, 22). In this regard, Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly (2005)—at the universal level—and Victor Konrad and Heather Nicol (2008, 2011)—at the Canada–United States boundary—have each made major inroads toward advancing and defining a broad-based borderlands model that includes a cross-border cultural component. Brunet-Jailly observes that local culture is an important analytical lens and that “although international borders divide stateless nations, borderland communities may remain unified by culture” (2005, 638). Konrad and Nicol (2008), based on an analysis of Brunet-Jailly’s work, go so far as calling for a re-articulation of local culture into the discussion of a borderlands theory and, in fact, begin one of their latest research projects by stating that it is border culture “that ultimately sustains linkages, assures continuity and maintains prosperity between bounded states” (2011, 70). They go on to expand on Brunet-Jailly’s general theory of borders, emphasizing that within the Canada–United States borderlands, culture needs to be “re-imagined as a heterogeneous rather than a homogeneous concept,” thereby incorporating diverse perspectives (Konrad and Nicol 2011, 82).

More and more, social scientists are recognizing the cultural dimension of borderlands studies by using stories from “ordinary people” as a discourse technique for framing the study of particular borderlands regions (Megoran 2006; Rumford 2008). Simply put, “borders and border subjects’ experiences of them, are increasingly seen as sets of interlinked processes or formations through which traces are sedimented in border narratives and within a mental and physical landscape” (Schimanski and Wolfe 2010, 42). It is within this context that Konrad and John Everitt (2011) argue that a focus on socially constructed identities and cross-border culture is integral to establishing a general theory of borderlands. Broadly speaking, social scientists are increasingly basing their descriptive analysis upon empirical evidence culled from border narratives of people living in the selected regions. Hence, for our study we let the people talk, telling us how they view their lives in relation to the other side of the border. We use the cultural construct of discourse narratives as a method for evaluating the meaning of borders and borderlands, centering our analysis on the perceptions of people who make their homes in borderlands communities.

Specifically, we let the people of the Lake Superior borderlands region tell us how they feel about the border, about their relationship with their cross-border neighbors, and whether they believe there exists a special relationship that transcends the border. The Lake Superior borderlands region is defined by the two geographic corridors connecting Canada and the United States as bounded by Lake Superior: Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario/Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan (often referred to as the “Twin Saults”) and Thunder Bay, Ontario/Duluth, Minnesota. We chose the Lake Superior region to study for one very simple reason: to date, it has received very little attention in the literature. While there is a rich and descriptive portrayal of many of the Canada–US border regions (Border Policy Research Institute 2010; Robertson 2011), the regions bounded by Lake Superior have been largely ignored. In addition, these two border regions compare nicely with respect to the defining concept of distance, which is said by some to be irrelevant in today’s globalizing world (Rumford 2008). Two of the cross border communities (Thunder Bay/Duluth) are separated by a great distance, while the other two (Twin Saults) are separated by a negligible distance. Yet, there is substantial evidence that the residents in both of these communities consider themselves to be living in a borderlands region.

It is our intention to use narrative interviews to analyze the Lake Superior borderlands region (as defined above) such that we can evaluate the usefulness of this discourse technique as it applies to borderlands theory-building. In addition, we use the perceptions of borderlands people to describe cross-border cultural, political, and social relationships. With this in mind, the next two sections delineate our framework of analysis and establish a description of the specific borderlands perspective that we use for exploring the Lake Superior region.

Stories: A framework of discourse analysis

The move toward a general borderlands theory, as discussed above, is cast in the idea that borderlands scholars must look beyond broader social processes by exploring the borders' contextual features. Used in such a manner, a narratives discourse serves as a way to maximize understanding of borderlands culture (Newman and Paasi 1998; Paasi and Prokkola 2008). David Newman (2006) suggests that narratives not only make borders come to life but remind us that it is the experiences of ordinary human beings that provide the true meaning of borders and borderlands. Newman insists that, "If we really want to know what borders mean to people, then we need to listen to their personal and group narratives" (2006, 154). Seen in this light, the essence of understanding borderlands is through the daily activities of the people who live in such regions:

Through narrative, we perceive the borders which surround us, which we have to cross on a daily basis and/or are prevented from crossing because we do not "belong" on the other side. (Newman 2006, 152)

Prokkola (2009) recognizes, as Newman suggests, that it is not abstract sociological constructs that shed light on the notion of borderlands but the experiences of people as they go about their daily lives; that it is only through people's narratives that we can make sense of the border experience and develop a true understanding of borderlands. In short, "By listening to people's narratives it is possible to gain an understanding of the meaning of borders in the lives and identities of people" (Prokkola 2009, 22). More importantly, Prokkola's work provides strong empirical evidence illustrating the power of narratives to explain borderland relationships. Accordingly, Prokkola is able to link narratives to the underlying social and cultural constructs that form the foundation of the search to establish a borderlands theoretical framework:

[W]hen people's interview stories and their multidimensionality is taken seriously, it becomes obvious that their borderland identities could not be fully understood separately from their life experience and ambitions, or from the societal and material conditions. (2009, 34)

Other scholars continue to build on the theoretical constructs of stories and narratives. Konrad and Everitt (2011) recently completed a borderlands study founded within the narrative framework, using interviews with community representatives and public officials (some involving two-hour discussions) as the primary way of examining interrelationships among security, cross-border integration, and identity formation regarding the United States borderlands with Canada and the British Virgin Islands (2011). Lena Laube and Christof Roos (2010), asserting that their focus is on peoples' perceptions (how they narrate the border), use border narratives to illustrate how the Eastern European borders of Finland and Austria changed since the fall of the Iron Curtain. Susan Hardwick and Ginger Mansfield (2009) use narrative interviews (elicited extended verbal accounts) to examine Canadian and United States national identities as it relates to the flow of immigrants across borders. Such narratives provide structure to the critique of border relations and sit at the center of our exploration of the Lake Superior region.

A borderlands perspective

Before we touch on the narratives, however, it is essential to characterize the Canada–United States borderlands relationship as it appears today. Roger Gibbins (2005)—who has conducted several extensive analyses of Canada–US borderlands—does just that. He provides the following synthesis illustrating the fact that Canadian—American border regions do not form a distinctive cultural environment:

[It] is difficult not to be struck by the unique features of the Canadian–American borderlands. The region is asymmetrical in a critically important sense: It is shallow and of relative insignificance on the American side of the international boundary, and deep and of great significance on the Canadian side. The underlying similarities of the Canadian and American societies have rendered the border of little importance in the United States, and of great importance in Canada. As the larger society, Americans have little to fear from the absence of a significant boundary between the two countries, whereas Canadians, as the smaller society, have much more to fear from cultural homogenization and economic domination.... In the final analysis, the

Canadian–American border and its regional communities may indeed be a unique case. (2005, 164-165)

In essence, Gibbins makes the argument for two distinct beliefs about the Canada–US borderlands (as described above). First, Canadian–American borderlands are neither culturally identifiable nor distinctive. Second, if one wants to make such a comparison, then only Canada can be described as a borderlands society; that American ideals “are so extensively woven into Canadian life that the national boundary all but evaporates. As a consequence, Canadian–American comparisons, slights both real and imagined, and undercurrents of anti-Americanism play prominent roles in the Canadian political culture and broader social fabric” (Gibbins 2005, 153).

A contrasting way to look at Canada–US borderlands is through the analytical description provided by Papademetriou and Meyers (2001). They argue that there is a remarkable degree of community-based cross-border cooperation between Canada and the United States on issues such as public health, access to education, environmental protection, joint regional planning, and law enforcement. Papademetriou and Meyers (2001) also speak of the uniqueness of border communities along the US-Canada border, asserting that this uniqueness is a result of a variety of factors: history of the regions, economics of the border communities, degree of economic and social integration, and the size and composition of the local population—shaped by the physical/geographic settings, the nature of the border itself (land, water, mountain), whether the border crossings are publicly or privately owned, the types of people and goods crossing the border, and even the personalities of federal agents stationed at the border. Furthermore, according to Papademetriou and Meyers, these US-Canada border communities view the border as “an asset, not as a disadvantage, and they believe they prosper because of the border, not in spite of it” (2001, 83). In the end, Papademetriou and Meyers provide readers with a slightly different description of the Canada–US borderlands than does Gibbins:

Border communities typically approach both the challenges and the opportunities of deeper cross-border relations in a remarkably pragmatic fashion. Communities along the US-Canada border typify this behavior....In fact, as cross-border contacts increase, local officials from both sides, in partnership with business interests, religious organizations, and community-based and other nongovernmental actors, seek to play increasingly significant roles in the ongoing discussions about the making and implementation of policies that affect their lives....Two other factors also facilitate better cross-border understanding: the growth in cross-border civil society contacts, and official efforts to consider local perspectives along borders. Civil society contacts are growing seemingly by leaps and bounds. (2001, 11-12)

Both the Gibbins and the Papademetriou and Meyers perspectives on the Canada–US borderlands relationship have merit as expressions of general ways that residents of borderlands view their counterparts on the other side of the border. Whether one tends to lean toward either one of these diverging views, the fact remains that the Canada–United States border, with its differing regional characteristics, offers a unique opportunity to explore cross-border community relationships. On the whole, as our investigative process plays out, readers will see that our findings suggest that a special relationship does indeed exist between the people who inhabit what we designate as the Lake Superior borderlands.

The Lake Superior borderlands: Thunder Bay/Duluth and the Twin Saults

There is no shortage of descriptions setting out the characteristics of the regions bounded by Lake Superior. The following two quotations were written specifically about Duluth, Minnesota:

For 10,000 years, people have been drawn to the Northland by its natural beauty and bounty. From the forests to the waters, from the large and small game to the rice, trees, fish and minerals, bounty has brought us up to this place, even as struggles for that wealth have at time, divided us.... (Duluth News-Tribune 2000, 1)

[One] brags about [Duluth's] natural setting: its beauty, created by both man and God; and its stimulating climate....It is located at the head of the largest body of fresh water in the world, Lake Superior....It is one of the natural flyways of the

hawk, bringing naturalists long distances to watch their annual migration....And Lake Superior is always there at the foot of the hills....Duluth is a city of seasons, and anyone who has been exposed to the four natural divisions of the year will always miss them if he moves to a more uniform climate. (Weygant 1976, 3)

Yet, these descriptions easily apply to the entire region that surrounds Lake Superior, including the Duluth/Thunder Bay and the Twin Saults borderlands regions. Moreover, when people talk about the power and influence of geology and geography that defines place, including such things as immense and valuable forests and wilderness areas, the ideal location for shipping timber, grain, and iron ore, as well as the idea that people live here for the quality of life, they could be talking about any of the communities surrounding Lake Superior (Aubut 2001; Axelson 2011; Dickinson 1981). And it all begins with the fact that Lake Superior contains 10 percent of the earth's surface fresh water and more than half of all the water in the Great Lakes combined, anchoring "a basin 89 percent forest covered and rich in [natural] resources" (Berg and Lemay 2010). For all practical purposes, Lake Superior defines the borderlands region it encompasses and in one way or another, affects all that it touches.

While the economies of these borderlands regions are certainly tied to shipping, all four communities have morphed into their respective regional cultural centers as well as regional medical, educational and governmental centers (Berg and LeMay 2010; Sandvik 1983). Further, each of these communities represents some form of isolation, being geographically far from other urban centers and/or generally possessing the perception that they are ignored by their respective state or provincial, as well as, national governmental institutions (Mount et al. 1995).

Geographically, the Sault Ste. Marie borderlands region is characterized by a bridge over the St. Mary's River that spans approximately one mile of water. The Twin Saults are not only considered to be an important commercial crossing (the ninth busiest Canada-US border crossing), it is said that they represent cross-border communities that "thrive and work where cooperation is necessary both to sustain livelihood and community" (Konrad and Nicol 2008, 123). In contrast to the relatively inconsequential distance between the Twin Saults, Thunder Bay and Duluth are physically separated by nearly 200 miles. Furthermore, the Duluth/Thunder Bay corridor is not recognized as any type of commercial crossing. They are, however, officially recognized as Sister Cities.

Tables 1 and 2 display some of the demographic data that define each of the border communities. One can easily see that these communities, at least on one level, are quite similar. In all four of these communities the vast preponderance of people are white, yet Thunder Bay and the Twin Saults each have a substantial percentage of First Nations or Native American people whose experience with the border, to be sure, is qualitatively different than the general population. In the words of Karl Hele, "many First Nations individuals [in the Great Lakes area], in the context of their economic pursuits, kinship links, religious and political applications, Indian policy, and many other intangibles, made decisions to reside on one side of the border or the other while maintaining community ties across it. Their efforts have tended to render meaningless such designations as American Indians or Canadian Natives" (Hele 2008, xviii).

Tables 1 and 2 show that the largest workforce in each of the communities is educational, health, and social services, ranging from 20.71 percent in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, to 33.82 percent in Duluth, Minnesota. Each community has a high unemployment rate, ranging from a low of 7.2 percent for Thunder Bay to a high of 9.7 percent for Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Median household income (adjusted to US dollars) is substantially larger for the two Canadian cities, with Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, having the highest at \$56,398 and Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan having the lowest at \$36,510. While the American cities have substantially higher percentages of people with a high school or some college experience, the Canadian communities have a much higher percentage of people with college or professional degrees.

[TABLES 1 AND 2 ABOUT HERE]

Methods and findings: The people and what they have to say

Now that we have a general overview of the Lake Superior borderlands region, it is time to hear what the people of the Lake Superior borderlands have to say about the border and their relationship to the people and communities just across the border. From December 2010 through December 2011, we conducted 262 interviews with people in all four communities (Duluth = 65; Thunder Bay = 60; Sault Ste. Marie, ON = 72; Sault Ste. Marie, MI = 65). The vast

majority of the interviews (91 percent) were conducted in person. All other interviews were conducted via phone and/or email.

The intent of the interviews was to gain perceptions from a wide range of people who make their homes in one of the borderlands communities. As mentioned in the introduction, our focus of study is on the people who live in the Lake Superior borderlands regions—ordinary people who are not only embedded in their local cultures, but are also connected in one way or another to a foreign country just across the border. In this light, the people interviewed for this study consisted of a mixture of individuals, from those with public responsibilities (e.g., mayors, city council members, heads of libraries, museums, or tourism units) and “regular” citizens (e.g., waitresses, gas station attendants, steel workers, truck drivers, bartenders, maintenance workers, construction workers, barbers). The interviews consisted of asking open-ended questions, with the following questions serving as the focus of this particular study: (1) How many years have you had experience with and/or use of the border? When was the last time you crossed the border? Why did you cross? (2) Is there a special relationship between the two border communities? Why is it special? (3) Do you view the border as a bridge or a barrier? Explain why. (4) Did 9/11 change the border relationship? If so, how? (5) On a daily basis, do you follow what is happening on the other side of the border? (6) Does what happens on the other side of the border affect your daily life?

Demographic information such as occupation and length of time lived in community was also collected. The interviews took approximately 30 minutes to an hour to complete, although many went much longer. The format of the interviews was semi-structured as each respondent had the opportunity to use his or her own words to describe how they felt about each of the areas of interest. Here is what they had to say.

Thunder Bay/Duluth borderlands region

Table 3 summarizes the interview results along the six broad interview questions asked. Overall, a much higher percentage of Canadians (than Americans) have extensive experience crossing the border. On all other questions, Canadians and Americans had general agreement. A vast majority of both Canadians and Americans do not see a special relationship between Thunder Bay and Duluth, view the border more as a bridge than a barrier, comment on the substantial changes in crossing the border since 9/11, and do not follow nor care what happens immediately across the border.

[TABLE 3 HERE]

The tabulated results suggest that the interconnectedness between the cross-border communities of Duluth and Thunder Bay appears weak at best. And the content of the interviews themselves substantiates this view. First and foremost, if there is any type of flow between these two communities, it generally appears to move from Canada to the United States. Despite the fact that Duluth and Thunder Bay are officially declared Sister Cities (and many people on both sides of the border note this), the majority of those interviewed from Duluth and Thunder Bay see no special relationship between the communities.

People from each community recognize similar languages (despite the accents), similar cultures (Finnish, Swedish, Italian heritages), and a similar love of the outdoors and attachment to the natural world. Some even mention that when you travel to the other side of the border it does not feel like you are in a foreign country—that the people and communities are “too much the same.” But most view the closeness of the Duluth/Thunder Bay relationship with skepticism, as noted by the following observation.

I do not think there is a special relationship between Duluth and Thunder Bay. Even when Canadians come down here they tend to stay to themselves, at least when I see them. I can tell Canadians right away; not only the way they talk and dress but just that they are not from here. I think Thunder Bay is much more isolated and coming here is like coming to the big city for them. We certainly are different peoples. (Airport Employee, Duluth)

This perception is also shared by many in Thunder Bay.

No, I do not see a connection between Thunder Bay and Duluth; not between governments, not between cities, not anything. Not universities either. I would say the two communities are pretty much separate. (Bookstore Clerk, Thunder Bay)

In general, people from Duluth do not have much interest in Thunder Bay; nor do they regularly travel there. Minnesotans go north but stop somewhere along the North Shore of Lake Superior, never quite making it to the border.

I have not crossed the border since 1998 and I personally know very few people from Duluth that go to Thunder Bay or who have gone to Thunder Bay. And I do not follow anything that happens in Thunder Bay. I would guess that people from Thunder Bay follow what is happening in Duluth more than we follow them. Thunder Bay people come to Duluth based on the exchange rate and traditionally it is for shopping. Duluth is a bigger place. I think people from Canada, in general, keep track of what happens in the United States much more than the other way around and I would say that is true for Duluth and Thunder Bay too. (Employee, Duluth Public Library)

You see Ontario license plates all over the place in Duluth. People from Thunder Bay come to Duluth to shop. There is a one-way focus that way, Thunder Bay to Duluth. It does not go the other way. So many people from Duluth go to the North Shore but then they stop. They do not cross the border. We know Thunder Bay is there, that it is the closest Canadian city. But why go to Thunder Bay when everything you want is here in Duluth? (Administrator, University of Minnesota-Duluth)

The idea, as expressed by the people of Duluth, that the relationship between Thunder Bay and Duluth is focused in one direction is also supported by those we interviewed in Thunder Bay. From their perspective, people from Thunder Bay regularly travel to Duluth, mostly for shopping but also for youth sporting events or to simply to get away to a different locale.

I've lived here all my life. I cross the border ten or twelve times a year. I go shopping but also go, just to go. Thunder Bay is pretty isolated. I go to get away. Go to the casino, to Duluth, hiking, stroll the lakefront; it is a different place to be. (Coffee Shop Owner, Thunder Bay)

The relationship between Thunder Bay and Duluth is pretty one-sided, if there is a sister relationship at all. Duluth benefits hugely because people from Thunder Bay spend so much money down there. But it is a one-way relationship. People from Thunder Bay spend lots of money in Duluth but people from Duluth never come to Thunder Bay, to spend money or for anything else. (Employee, Public Library, Thunder Bay)

People from Thunder Bay go to Duluth all the time but people from Duluth do not come up here. Thunder Bay is not a destination for them. In Duluth you see Canadians all the time. It is easy to observe. In Thunder Bay you'd never know if Americans were here or not. You don't notice it. It's just that obvious that you see Canadians in Duluth but you don't see people from Duluth here. In one city, Duluth, you notice. In the other city, Thunder Bay, you do not. You just do not see Duluth people here in Thunder Bay. (Accountant, Thunder Bay)

Even though the travel across the border, for the most part, flows in a southerly direction, the perception of the border as a bridge (rather than a barrier) is shared by both Canadians and Americans. Along this line of thought, for many in Thunder Bay and Duluth, crossing the border is considered easy, a routine matter.

The border is not a barrier for those of us who travel regularly. We have passports and it's no big deal to cross the border. But if you don't travel and don't have a passport, then it could be a barrier. Then you may want to cross but you don't have a passport so you can't go. (Member, Duluth Recreation Club)

There is no trouble crossing the border at all. In fact, for some of us, the border guards get to know who you are, and with a bus of young hockey players, they come on the bus but just wave us through. My Mom and Dad go across the border every week, to Portage to gamble, and they know

the border guards and the border guards know them by name and it is "Hey, how you doing?" And they are on their way. They are actually on a first name basis. (Retired Accountant, Thunder Bay)

Despite the ease of crossing the border, the restrictions put in place following 9/11, especially the passport requirement, are viewed in a very negative light. In addition, many think the border guards (especially the American border guards) ask too many invasive and unnecessary questions. In these instances, people clearly view the border as a very unfriendly barrier to travel. And this is true for both Canadians and Americans.

It used to be so easy to cross the border before 9/11. Guards would ask, how you doing, and you would be on your way. Now, I don't know the words to describe the mess, but it is much stricter. You have to get out of the car, you are searched, and there is a bigger presence of security. It never used to be that way. It is much harder getting back into the US again, I don't have the words to describe my frustration. (Liquor Store Clerk, Duluth)

The border is definitely a barrier. I just don't go across. It is too much of a hassle. The border guards ask so many questions, ask people to pop the trunk. I am a middle-aged white lady. Are you kidding me, me a terrorist? It is a joke. Plus, American border guards are snarky; want the names of the restaurants you eat at, geez. (Public Administrator, Duluth)

It is more difficult than ever to cross the border. You have to have a passport and that is a lot more restrictive on its own. It is actually harder to get back into Canada. They don't like you spending money in the US instead of Canada and for some people there are quite strong feelings in that regard. A lot of people in Thunder Bay just bite the bullet and put up with it. There is some resentment in that people from Thunder Bay think they help pump up Duluth, put a lot of money into Duluth, build it up and don't get any credit for doing that. (Professor, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay)

People from Thunder Bay are much more apt to view having a passport as a routine matter. Simply put, Canadians stressed that getting (and having) a passport was no big deal.

The big change was the passport requirement. But Canadians get passports like there is nothing to it. It is part of our lives. Americans don't get passports like that. A lot of Americans don't even have passports. Americans are more interested in just themselves. (Accountant, Thunder Bay)

You need a passport and it is more rigorous now. There is much more security. But there should be. I don't see it as a burden. Just part of the world we live in now. Border guards are just doing their job. American border guards are very friendly. They ask questions when you cross but as long as you have your passport you are all right. One thing that did change is that you never used to have to open your trunk but now they ask you to pop the trunk. But that is OK. (Public Radio Employee, Thunder Bay)

People from Duluth, however, had a very different take on the passport requirement, viewing it as a burden and not worth the cost.

I have lived here six years. I graduated from UMD [University of Minnesota-Duluth] and stayed. I came from Minneapolis. I have never crossed the border. I have a passport but my friends do not. They think it is too much of a hassle to get a passport and the cost is over a hundred dollars and it is a bureaucratic nightmare, so people just don't do it. Not just to go across the border into Canada. I've been to Mexico, but not to Canada. (Bartender, Duluth)

I have not gone across the border since they started asking for passports. I don't have a passport and will not get one for a one-day trip across the border. It is not worth it. (Employee, University of Minnesota-Duluth)

I've lived here pretty much all my life, at least in the area. I have not crossed the border, ever. I have not been to Thunder Bay. I don't have a passport and have no desire to get one or go across

the border. But even before the passport requirement I was happy to be where I am and really have no desire to go to Canada or cross the border. (Office Supply Business Clerk, Duluth)

The results portraying the perceptions of people crossing the border are quite interesting. But the real surprise, at least to us, was the almost complete lack of interest displayed by the people in each of these communities with the goings on in their Sister Community. While some people on each side of the border follow what is going on just across the border, most people in Duluth and Thunder Bay pay very little attention to what is happening on a daily basis in their Sister City. People from Thunder Bay do, however, follow what is happening in the United States at the national level, whereas people from Duluth do not, in general, follow what is happening at the national level in Canada.

I do not follow Thunder Bay at all. I grew up here and never left. I have never been to Thunder Bay and have no plans to go. (Resort Receptionist, Duluth)

I do not follow what is happening in Thunder Bay at all. We do get a lot of people from Thunder Bay coming to Duluth for shopping mostly. But we also get a lot of people from Minneapolis coming here too, lots. Duluth is a feeder for both Thunder Bay and Minneapolis. We are a destination that way. But I don't follow Thunder Bay at all, not even a little bit. I couldn't tell you anything about it, not a thing. What happens in Thunder Bay does not affect me in any way and I really don't care what goes on there. (Restaurant Business Manager, Duluth)

I do not follow Canada and what goes on there, not at all; and I do not follow anything that is going on in Thunder Bay. I am not interested in Canada, and I have to simply say that it is the United States that dominates my news cycle. (Nurse Practitioner, Duluth)

I do not follow Duluth or what is happening there. I don't think anyone in Thunder Bay could tell you about Duluth, its politics, who the Mayor is or anything about it. I do not follow the newspapers, news, anything about Duluth. (City Employee, Thunder Bay)

I follow what is happening in the United States, but not specifically Duluth, just because I am more apt to see that than anything from Duluth. You can't help following the United States. We are inundated with American influence and whether we like it or not we are tied to the United States economy. It directly affects us. Americans know one thing about Canada compared to Canadians knowing fifty things about the United States. We look at things like the death penalty, the treatment of gays, all just silly things. So we certainly have different cultures. (Public Library Employee, Thunder Bay)

I do not especially follow what is happening in Duluth. As a Canadian, however, I am very much aware of what goes on in the United States. But Americans sure don't know what is going on in Canada. But Canadians are bombarded with United States stuff; TV especially. (Library Employee, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay)

I do not follow Duluth at all unless there is a deal on clothes. What goes on in Duluth does not affect me in any way. I do follow things in the United States generally; big things like Osama Bin Laden or elections, but otherwise no. I do watch all American TV shows, yeah, a lot, so I do follow the United States that way for sure. (Hotel Cashier, Thunder Bay)

The Twin Saults borderlands region

Compared to the Thunder Bay/Duluth region, the Twin Saults show a much higher degree of connectedness. Table 4 summarizes this finding. Both Americans and Canadians have a high degree of experience crossing the border and see major changes since 9/11. While a much higher percentage of people from the Twin Saults see a special relationship with their cross-border community (compared to Duluth and Thunder Bay), there is a substantial difference between the two sides, with a higher percentage of Americans (58.5%) viewing the relationship as special and just under a majority (48.6%) of Canadians feeling this way. And like their counterparts in the Thunder

Bay/Duluth region (but to a lesser extent), the vast majority of Canadians and Americans do not follow nor care what happens immediately across the border.

[TABLE 4 HERE]

Just as was observed in the Duluth/Thunder Bay corridor, the flow of people for the most part appears to go substantially from Canada to the United States. However, in contrast to the weakness of the Duluth/Thunder Bay relationship, Ontario and Michigan communities that make up the Twin Saults appear to have a much stronger interconnectedness. A good many people on both sides of the border see a very special relationship. The proximity of the border and the daily interactions of the people in the Twin Saults provide a sense of sameness. This points to a distinct difference between the Duluth/Thunder Bay and Twin Saults corridors, with the Twin Saults (physically separated by only a river and bridge) showing a much higher level of integration than the geographically distant communities of Thunder Bay and Duluth.

I've lived here all my life. I last crossed two weeks ago for shopping. I remember the ferry as a child. We shopped in Sault, Michigan. It used to be called "one city, two countries," as seamless as you can imagine. It's not quite that way these days, but it's close. This situation is also unique because Canada has the larger city. But there's mutual assistance in emergencies across borders. Politicians have more formal relationships with our cross-border counterparts too, as we have joint meetings. There's plenty of employment across borders. We go where the talent goes. (City Official, Ontario)

Yes, in a way there is a special relationship between the two sides. It is not like crossing into a foreign country. We are the same kind of people, so I guess that is something we share. (Administrative Assistant, Algoma University, Ontario)

We have a very special relationship with the Michigan side. We are both community oriented. People don't leave or if they do, they come back. This is a very friendly community, very close knit. And across the border is just the same. We are a lot alike. (Grocery Store Employee, Ontario)

Yes, we are pretty much the same I'd say. There is not a lot of difference in the people on both sides. We cross the border so easily. It is really not that separate. The flow seems to be in both directions. The arts are big here. People from the other side bring their kids here for music, dance, theater, the arts. (Specialty Shop Owner, Ontario)

A lot of Michigan folks come here to the restaurants. I would describe the relations as amicable. It is very enjoyable going across the border. It is not like going to foreign nation. Our relationship is excellent. However, I would also say that many more Canadians go across to the American side than Americans come here. (Public Library Employee, Ontario)

I think there is a special relationship between the two Saults; at least from my point of view. I really do not distinguish between Americans and Canadians. We are very closely tied, the same people. One difference is that on the United States side, Americans feel you should be proud of your country. Maybe we look a little more inward than Canadians. But I still think we are still much more alike than different. (Medical Doctor, Michigan)

I think there is a special relationship between the two sides. It is all the same to me. We are similar people. It is not like a foreign country when you go to the Canadian side; not at all. There are a lot of students from Canada in my classes, maybe more than half in some of my classes, so there is a lot of connection there. (Student, Lake Superior State University, Michigan)

However, there were also many of those interviewed, with Americans seemingly more adamant than Canadians, who do not see a special relationship.

There is no connection that makes the relationship special; no connection at all. It really is two separate places. I also think that a lot more Canadians cross to the other side than Americans come here; at least when you are talking about the two Saults communities. (Hairdresser, Ontario)

We are two completely different societies. You know they are Canadians and we are Americans. There is not a single community. There is no such thing as the “Twin Saults” as one big community. No, that is far from the truth. (Gift Shop Attendant, Michigan)

We are two foreign countries. They are Canada. We are America. And there is no in between. We are not the “Twin Saults;” that is not true. They just do that because we both have the same name. But we are not connected any other way. (Souvenir Shop Manager, Michigan)

The “Twin Saults” concept is not quite the way you would expect it to be. It has always been an emphasis of the city leaders but it is complicated by the changes from 9/11 and the bridge traffic. There are still lots of Canadians that come here. A lot more Canadians come here than Americans go over there. Lots of Americans cross but not the locals. It used to be so easy to cross. It was common. You would not even think about it. You would go to a movie. It was charming, we loved doing it. Now, it has changed drastically. (Professor, Lake Superior State University, Michigan)

Some in the Twin Saults cross the border regularly, almost as a routine part of their lives.

I cross the border relatively frequently. It is extremely close, a few minutes away. I just watch the web cam and when there is no traffic, I go. If I watch the web cam I can usually make it across in ten minutes or so. It is not a big deal to cross. In fact, it is rather easy. I go across to golf as I belong to the club on the other side. But I also go to restaurants and shop on the other side too. The restaurants on this side are pretty limited, other than a few good Italian ones. There are more options on the Michigan side. (Professor, Algoma University, Ontario)

I've been here all my life, 28 years. I cross all the time; at least once a week to shop, get gas, milk, drink beer. It is something that is part of my regular routine. (City Maintenance Worker, Ontario)

I cross frequently; both my wife and I. We cross to check out the art scene. My wife is involved in the local social network and is a volunteer for community events. We like to see what is new in the arts and you have to go over there to find out. It also has the best grocery store in the region with great choice. We also have a lot of friends on the other side. (Retired Professor, Lake Superior State University, Michigan)

Others in the Twin Saults—more so on the Michigan side, and especially since 9/11 and the implementation of the passport requirement—find crossing the border to be difficult, unrewarding, and even humiliating.

It is humiliating crossing the border. When searches started, questioning became more personal. They have gone overboard. Many people think it is humiliating to answer these questions and go through all this. The emphasis is on security and it has definitely caused some people to say the heck with it; it is not worth it to go through. And it is typical of Americans to go overboard. (Administrator, Algoma University, Ontario)

I do have a lot of experience with crossing the border, and I can tell you there is not much I like about crossing. Because of my bad experiences I do not go across the border much anymore. You are very rigorously questioned, in detail; where do you live, what is your address. They certainly put you through the paces. That is crossing into the US. Coming back into Canada is a breeze. (Administrator, Sault College, Ontario)

No, I don't cross any more. Well, maybe once every four months or so. I avoid crossing because of the inconvenience. It all changed with 9/11. I am very unhappy with the unpredictability of crossing, how long it will take. It is not too bad coming from the States' side to Canada but getting

into the States is terrible. And Americans, they are less likely to leave home. They are isolating themselves. I used to travel to the States a lot but not very much anymore. It is just too inconvenient. (Professor, Algoma University, Ontario)

I have lived here all my life (except I went away to college for three and a half years). I have never crossed the border. I don't have a passport or an enhanced driver's license and I don't plan on getting one. If you don't have a passport or enhanced driver's license, you can't get across. So I can't cross, but I don't want to cross. Why should I go to the other side? (Phone Store Salesperson, Michigan)

I have not crossed since 9/11. It is just too much of a hassle. I have a Tribal card. I belong to the Tribe so I can cross for that if I want but I choose not to. There is no reason to go over to the other side. I have friends over there but they come to visit me. They are the ones who have to cross. I don't want the bother. The lines are too long. There are too many questions and it is not worth it. It used to be so easy to cross, so easy. Before we would just cross; a few questions. Now, it just takes too much time. (Phone Service Manager, Michigan)

No, I don't cross. No more. They won't let me cross unless I have documentation because they consider me a terrorist. Seriously, it's humiliating. We used to be able to cross daily. No problems; just cross and it was friendly. No more. They want to keep us out. It's terrible. It's a shame. If I had to cross to see my daughter or something like that, then I'd get a passport. But there is no reason to cross. There is nothing on the other side that I need. It's not worth it. (Souvenir Shop Employee, Michigan)

9/11 changed everything. We went from people going over every day, students, family members. Then the Canadians just followed the default position of the United States. Thanks go to the Bush Administration. It's beginning to feel like the Berlin Wall. It has separated friends, families. It has shredded whatever relationships we had. (Administrator, Sault College, Ontario)

The bridge is a barrier because of the passport requirement and so much more. It is so difficult to cross the border and it should be. We are foreign and so are they, so there is a lot of caution, especially for the United States. We are a target and people do not think much of us anymore. We are not respected internationally. (Public Library Employee, Ontario)

I do not cross the bridge anymore. It is too much trouble. The lines are way too long. It is not worth it. I've got a passport, but there are so many questions and some questions that just don't make sense. I had a friend from the Canadian side and we did knitting patterns together and she used to come over here and I would go over there and we would go places together, to all the little shops. But it is too much trouble to cross so we just stopped. (Public School Office Manager, Michigan)

I don't cross the border anymore; not since they put in the passport restriction. I used to cross quite regularly to shop and visit. I don't have a passport. The cost is not worth getting a passport just to visit the other side. The passport restriction stops me from going over. It used to be so easy, a regular part of my life. But since the restrictions, it is not. Time is part of the problem. It just takes too long sometimes and I don't want the hassle of going and not knowing how long it will take. (Department Store Checker, Michigan)

The 9/11 restrictions have stopped a lot of Americans from crossing over. The cost is too high. What is it, \$180 to get a passport? A lot of people don't think it is worth it, so they just stopped crossing. Before the restrictions, it was so easy to cross. Hello, what are you going to do, thanks, and on your way. Now they ask very personal questions and this is embarrassing to some. I had a friend who was asked all kinds of personal health questions. She said she was going to doctor, the hospital and it was a humiliating experience for her. I told her to just say she was going shopping next time. (Public School Teacher, Michigan)

While some people on each side of the border follow what is going on just across the line, most people in the Twin Saults pay very little attention to what is happening on a daily basis in the community just on the other side of the bridge. People from the Ontario side do, however, follow what is happening in the United States at the national level, whereas people from the Michigan side do not, in general, follow what is happening at the national level in Canada.

I don't follow the other side but do hear a lot of stuff on the radio. The biggest country western station is from Canada and I listen all the time and it gives both the Ontario and Michigan news and updates. (City Groundskeeper, Michigan)

I don't follow the news from the other side, but keep up with some of the things that happen across the river because we get so many Canadians coming here to shop and I talk to them every day. They are a big part of our business and I hear things as I am ringing them up. (Department Store Checker, Michigan)

The other side really does not affect me. But I do think of the "Twin Saults" as a single community. Since I was born and raised here in the UP, I consider the whole region to be a community, including the other side of the border. I've come to think of it as all one single place. I guess you get callous about it. You should make distinctions. But I don't. It is a regular routine and part of our lives that we see Canadians all the time. And I see a lot of Americans that cross the border and it is just not a big deal. And it is easy to cross if you have a passport. (Security Guard, Michigan)

I follow quite a bit what is happening based on Chamber of Commerce news. I'm always kind of aware of the Michigan side vis-à-vis gas prices and the exchange rate. I follow US politics a lot. There is plenty of US content on the television. I am affected by what happens on the Michigan side depending on the economy. For instance, if gas prices climb over here, then the bridge will be busier as Ontario goes to Michigan to gas up. (Chamber of Commerce Employee, Ontario)

Happenings on the other side of the border affect me minimally, if at all. (Library Staff, Algoma University, Ontario).

I make an effort to following things in Canada, but others do not. For instance, there was a murder on the other side of the river, in January, probably from the drug wars. The body was dismembered. It's a very rare event, but Sault Michigan knew nothing about it. It's only two miles across the border! The Canadian news gives more of a world perspective than the US news. I know this because I lived in Canada for a while. (Member, Chippewa Indian Nation, Michigan)

It affects me very little. However, we do have joint emergency services agreements and several years ago, Sault Michigan had a major downtown fire that overwhelmed their fire department, so Sault Ontario responded. There is also a joint bridge authority that meets. (Employee, Mayor's Office, Ontario)

My wife and I don't really follow what happens in Sault Michigan. However, we are interested in American politics, as many Canadians are. So I suppose I am saying that while we don't pay much attention to what our immediate neighbors to the south are doing, we do look at what is happening in the nation as a whole. (Sault Star Newspaper Staff, Ontario)

Analysis and Conclusions

A sense of borderlands

Our goals for this research project were twofold: (1) to highlight the Canada–United States cross-border relationship from the perspective of the people who actually live in borderlands regions, and (2) to evaluate the usefulness of narrative interviews as a contributing factor toward advancing the concept of a borderlands theory. Regarding our first goal, several things stand out. The border does appear to be more prominent in Canadian lives. Canadians in

Thunder Bay and Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, pay much closer attention to the border than do Americans in Duluth and Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. This is evidenced by two things. First, the flow of border crossings clearly goes from Canada into the United States, especially in the Duluth/Thunder Bay corridor. Canadians are more likely to have passports, and to use them to cross into the United States. Americans not only are lacking possession of passports (compared to their Canadian counterparts), they are also less likely to cross into Canada. People from Duluth do not, as a matter of practice travel to Thunder Bay, whereas there exists a very strong contingent of people from Thunder Bay who regularly travel to Duluth. In the Twin Saults the difference in flow across the border is not so prominent. What is prominent is that there are a good many people on the Michigan side who have never crossed the border or who have stopped crossing since the passport restrictions were implemented.

It is clear that, Canadians, for the most part, follow what is happening in the United States. They are aware of United States politics at the national level and follow American media fairly closely. They know who the President is, when the elections are taking place, and who the Presidential candidates are. Americans, on the other hand, do not follow Canadian politics or media at the national level and are quite ignorant, in general, of what is happening in Canada. The disinterest in things Canadian came across very clear in the interviews. For the most part, people south of the border do not pay much attention to things happening either at the border or north of the border.

What is especially interesting to note is that the people of Thunder Bay and Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, just like their counterparts in Duluth and Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, generally do not follow what is happening just across the border. There is no specific knowledge of community issues, especially if that knowledge pertains to things on the governmental agenda or who is running the government. People know the price of gas and whether the casino is smoking or non-smoking, what the drinking age is, and the best time to cross the border. In general, however, the people of these communities do not follow the substantive issues occurring immediately across the border. Yet, there is something unique about this situation. Our interviews indicate that the border in and of itself is not important; that it is just a minor obstacle to be negotiated to get to the other side; that it is no big deal. It is accepted that there are two different, distinct countries, but not two, different and distinct communities. In essence, there appears to be a substantial degree of sameness in these cross-border communities. Even though people that cross the border are aware they are in a foreign country, there is such a strong similarity between the communities and the people that the differences are just not that noticeable. This suggests a definitive sense of borderlands within both the Thunder Bay/Duluth and Twin Saults regions. The interviews of people living in these regions clearly demonstrate that in the geographical regions that surround Lake Superior, people on one side of the border share values, beliefs, feelings, and expectations with people on the other side of the border.

At the same time, there is a feeling among the Lake Superior borderlands people that the cross-border relationship between Canadians and Americans is not nearly as strong as it was several decades ago. Time after time, people in all four communities spoke of the “good old days”—a time when the universities and the communities had much closer ties; a time when both official and unofficial connections were much more common. Of course, this finding may simply purport to a generational gap, where older citizens are remembering the days when crossing the border used to be such an easy thing to do. Still, according to those interviewed, there are fewer formal or institutional connections today between governments, universities, and libraries across the border than there were in the past.

Some formal institutional linkages are in place. After all, Thunder Bay and Duluth are Sister Cities and the Twin Saults work closely regarding policing, firefighting, and border patrols. But one would expect much more from Sister Cities and two communities encompassed as “twins.” Recently, the major universities in Duluth (University of Minnesota-Duluth) and Thunder Bay (Lakehead University) sponsored an event to highlight the connections between the universities and to forge closer ties. Yet, there remain few strong connections between the universities. Almost all those interviewed said that they wish there were stronger connections but could list very few.

As noted above, the restrictions implemented since 9/11—especially the passport requirement—have affected Americans in Duluth and Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, much more than they have affected Canadians in Thunder Bay and Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. For many, crossing the border is a hassle, especially when crossing into the United States. People who regularly crossed the border insisted that how easy it is to cross the border depends on which border guard you get. Furthermore, many who cross the border regularly describe the crossing as humiliating. Where once it was easy to cross in a timely manner, it has now become a much more difficult process, and many have decided it is not worth the effort. However, there still remains a vibrant crossing of the border in the Twin Saults region as well as a strong Canada to US crossing of the border in the Duluth/Thunder Bay region. It is just that with

the newly instituted barriers to freedom of movement, the sense that the two sides of the border represent a single community with shared values has been diminished. Crossing the border, for many, has turned into an anxiety filled experience, at times even humiliating, and this experience accentuates the fact that people are crossing into a foreign country. Under these circumstances, building cross-border linkages becomes even more difficult.

There has definitely been a very negative backlash to the longer lines, the many more questions, and the general delay in crossing the border since 9/11. While most say that crossing continues to be fairly easy, most also say that the restrictions bring about bad feelings and mistrust. Canadians tend to emphasize the overzealousness of the American border guards and what they believe is an extreme emphasis on security; arguing that it is a bit much. Americans, as a whole, feel the same way. While there exists a general understanding that these safeguards are necessary, most still believe that it is too much of a hassle. Surprisingly, very few respondents on either side of the border mentioned terrorism when asked to describe the international border and its workings. When terrorists were mentioned, it was with respect to the fact that respondents felt like they were being treated like terrorists. When specifically questioned about terrorism, most responded that it is a concern, but it was not their primary concern regarding the border. The major concern of citizens crossing the border is the time and effort it takes getting through the checkpoints, not the possibility of terrorists using the border as an entry point (especially into the US).

There are some important findings one can take away from the thoughts and ideas shared by the people living in these regions. In addition to what has already been described in this paper, there is a strong sense of shared values across these communities. They share very similar historical, geographical, economic and cultural settings. Founded on the abundance of natural resources (e.g., mining, timber, the great outdoors, the lake), as well as being situated at key points of transportation and shipping, each of these regions has also suffered the boom-and-bust periods of a natural resource-based economy and have developed a working-class culture and atmosphere. Because of these shared experiences and their inherent tie to the lake and land, the people who populate each of these regions, be they Canadian or American, pretty much look the same. Whether you are in Duluth or Thunder Bay or on either side of the St. Mary's River, other than the accents, it would be difficult to tell the people in these communities apart. When asked about what makes their communities special, time after time, the respondents named the same things. Moreover, to a person, respondents would say that despite the fact that there were differences between Americans and Canadians, they still shared the same basic values of family, hard work, and ties to the land and water. In other words, through their very own words, they portray a strong sense of living within a borderlands region.

Narrative discourse

Following the guidance of Brunet-Jailly (2005) and Konrad and Nicol (2008, 2011) with respect to the importance of culture in defining a borderlands theory, and of Newman (2006) and Prokkola (2009) with respect to gaining knowledge through a discourse analysis framework, we add support to the growing literature that argues that the perspectives of ordinary people must be taken into account if one wants to understand the true nature of a borderlands region. Certainly, abstract theoretical constructs and macro-level data summaries provide essential elements toward establishing an understanding of borderlands. But without listening to what ordinary people have to say, we miss out on critical aspects that define particular regions.

For instance, the literature tells us that there is nothing monolithic about regions that span the Canada–United States border. Each of the regions possesses particular qualities and characteristics. In the case of the Lake Superior region, almost all that is written about the region is cast in the light of the great outdoors, including the natural resources that make up the economic base and the terrain that challenges outdoor enthusiasts. But talking to the people living in the region highlights the *intensity* of this observation and indicates how the lake and the adjoining wilderness areas are instilled in the essence of everyday life by all who reside in proximity to Lake Superior. Similarly, it may be interesting to note the overall numbers of people crossing the border over recent times. But we would argue it is much more interesting to know the reason why people choose to cross or not cross the border. To hear, time after time, from people who live in Duluth and Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, that it is not worth the cost of a passport or an enhanced driver's license to cross into Canada for a day visit (when day crossings were so prevalent just a short time ago) is to learn the depth of profound emotions that the recently created border restrictions have generated.

The narrative discourse (through our interviews) also produced empirical evidence illustrating the often repeated criticism that Canadians know more about the United States than Americans know about Canada. It is one thing to hear such rhetoric in the media; it is another thing to hear it from so many ordinary people who live in the Canada–

United States borderlands. One would think that living in such close proximity to the border would lessen this differentiation. It does not. This asymmetry in attention to the other side of the border is much more than an abstract observance or the result of an academic exercise. It is real and woven into the very fabric of the Canada–United States relationship. Furthermore, it sets the tone for all other cross-border tendencies.

All in all, anyone wishing to know about cross-border relationships—including the eclectic nature of the regions that characterize the Canada–United States border—would be unwise to ignore the words of Prokkola: “It is through narratives that people make sense of and communicate their ideas and experiences of borders, thus people’s narratives expand our understanding of borders and bordering practices” (2009, 21). It is only through the lens of ordinary people that a true sense of borderlands can be derived.

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Table 1. Demographic data: Duluth and Thunder Bay.

	Duluth, Minnesota, USA (2005–2009 Census) ¹		Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada (2006 Census) ²	
Population	84,436	% Total	109,140	% Total
White	77,015	91.21	95,270	87.29
Black or African American	1839	2.18	435	0.4
Native American/Aboriginal	2192	2.6	8845	8.1
Asian	1408	1.67	2070	1.9
Hispanic/Latino	968	1.45	165	0.15
Economic Indicators				
Median household income 2009 (US\$)	\$39,602		\$46,050*	
Average value of owned dwelling (US\$)	\$150,300		\$123,563*	
Unemployment rate	8.1%		7.2%	
Labor and Industry	Positions	% Total	Positions	% Total
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	382	.92	2,030	3.64
Manufacturing & construction	4173	10.14	7290	13.10
Wholesale & retail trade	8430	20.49	8675	15.59
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental	1771	4.30	2315	4.16
Business & professional services	5564	13.52	9375	16.85
Educational, health, and social services	13,920	33.82	13,395	24.07
Other services	6912	16.80	12,560	18.98
Education (population 25 years+)	Respondents	% Total	Respondents	% Total
Less than a high school diploma	4018	8.34	8885	15.24
High school grad and/or some college	24,948	51.81	14,425	24.75
Associates degree/trades certificate	4208	8.74	6885	11.81
Bachelor's degree	9702	20.15	16,690	28.64
Graduate or professional degree	5273	10.95	11,400	19.56

Notes: * Adjusted based on conversion values from Canadian dollars to US dollars for 2006 (<http://fx.sauder.ubc.ca>).

¹ US Census Bureau. (2005–2009). American Community Survey, Duluth city, Minnesota. Retrieved December 19, 2011, from: http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFacts?_event=&geo_id=16000US2717000&_geoContext=01000US|04000US2716000US2717000&_street=&_county=Duluth&_cityTown=Duluth&_state=04000US27&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=geoSelect&_useEV=&pxct=fph&pgsl=160&_submenul=factsheet_1&ds_name=DEC_2000_SAFF&_ci_nbr=null&qr_name=null®=null%3Anull&_keyword=&_industry=

² Stats Canada (2006). Stats Canada Community Profile: Thunderbay, Ontario. Retrieved December 19, 2011, from: [http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=3558004&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&Data=Count&SearchText=thunder%20bay&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&Custom="](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=3558004&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&Data=Count&SearchText=thunder%20bay&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&Custom=)

Table 2. Demographic data: Sault Ste. Marie Michigan and Sault Ste. Marie Ontario.

	Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan (2005–2009 Census) ¹		Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario (2006 Census) ²	
Population	14,003	% Total	74,948	% Total
White	10,807	77.17	68,028	90.76
Black or African American	212	1.51	230	0.30
Native American/Aboriginal identity	2060	14.71	5980	7.98
Asian	201	1.49	430	0.57
Hispanic/Latino	402	2.87	90	0.12
Economic Indicators Median household income 2009 (US\$)	\$36,510		\$56,398*	
Average value of owned dwelling (US\$)	\$84,100		\$116,427*	
Unemployment rate	9.7%		8.1%	
Labor and Industry	Positions	% Total	Positions	% Total
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	0	0	555	1.52
Manufacturing & construction	564	8.49	6190	17.00
Wholesale & retail trade	1315	19.79	5430	14.91
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental	225	3.39	1235	3.39
Business & professional services	1077	16.21	6495	17.83
Educational, health, and social services	1829	27.53	7540	20.71
Other services	1634	24.59	8970	24.63
Education (population 25 years+)	Respondents	% Total	Respondents	% Total
Less than a high school diploma	1091	12.64	5170	13.05
High school grad and/or some college	5010	59.04	11,325	28.58
Associates degree/trades certificate	541	6.26	4085	10.31
Bachelor's degree	1347	15.61	11,910	30.06
Graduate or professional degree	642	7.44	7135	18.01

Notes: * Adjusted based on conversion values from Canadian dollars to US dollars for 2006 (<http://fx.sauder.ubc.ca>).

¹ US Census Bureau. (2005–2009). Fact sheet: Sault Ste. Marie city, Michigan. Retrieved December 19, 2011, from: http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFacts?_event=&geo_id=16000US2671740&_geoContext=01000US%7C04000US26%7C16000US2671740&_street=&_county=Sault+Ste.+Marie&_cityTown=Sault+Ste.+Marie&_state=04000US27&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=geoSelect&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=160&_submenuId=factsheet_1&ds_name=ACS_2009_5YR_SAFF&_ci_nbr=null&q_r_name=null®=null%3Anull&_keyword=&_industry=

² Stats Canada (2006). Stats Canada Community Profile: Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. Retrieved December 19, 2011, from: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=3557061&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&Data=Count&SearchText=Sault%20Ste.%20Marie&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&Custom=>

Table 3. Percent answering questions as listed.

		Thunder Bay	Duluth
Do you have extensive experience with the border?	Yes	93.3	44.6
	No	6.7	55.4
	(n)	(60)	(65)
Is the border relationship special?	Yes	32.1	21.5
	No	67.9	78.5
	(n)	(53)	(65)
Do you view the border as a bridge or barrier?	Bridge	81.1	73.3
	Barrier	18.9	26.7
	(n)	(53)	(60)
Do you see changes at the border since 9/11?	Yes	85.5	70.5
	No	15.5	29.5
	(n)	(55)	(61)
Do you follow what happens on the other side of the border?	Yes	16.9	13.8
	No	83.1	86.2
	(n)	(60)	(65)
Does what happens on the other side of the border affect your daily life?	Yes	5.0	12.3
	No	95.0	87.7
	(n)	(60)	(65)

Note: The data delineated in this table is solely the product of the author's interviews.

Table 4. Percent answering questions as listed.

		Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario	Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan
Do you have extensive experience with the border?	Yes	97.2	80.0
	No	2.8	20.0
	(n)	(72)	(65)
Is the border relationship special?	Yes	48.6	58.5
	No	51.4	41.5
	(n)	(72)	(65)
Do you view the border as a bridge or barrier?	Bridge	62.0	45.3
	Barrier	38.0	54.7
	(n)	(71)	(64)
Do you see changes at the border since 9/11?	Yes	91.4	98.4
	No	8.6	1.6
	(n)	(70)	(63)
Do you follow what happens on the other side of the border?	Yes	38.9	26.2
	No	61.1	73.8
	(n)	(72)	(65)
Does what happens on the other side of the border affect your daily life?	Yes	25.0	27.7
	No	75.0	72.3
	(n)	(72)	(65)

Note: The data delineated in this table is solely the product of the author's interviews.