

**PUZZLES IN THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FRONTIERS:  
PROBLEMS, SOME SOLUTIONS, AND METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This paper examines ways in which world-system analysis can be employed fruitfully to explore frontier social processes. Conversely, it also examines how frontier social processes and events can be very valuable explorations of highly localized processes – geographically and temporally – of world-systems. The study of frontier regions can help to uncover the ways in which many world-systemic contexts shape local human agency. Conversely, the study of these highly localized human practices offers ways to gain insights to how individual actions constantly reconstruct world-systems. Finally, many of the lessons learned here with respect to frontiers, especially in regard to ethnic and national identity formation and transformation can be extended to other social concerns.*