

EUBORDERSCAPES Newsletter

Mapping Conceptual Change in Thinking European Borders

by JUSSI LAINE & CHIARA BRAMBILLA

EUBORDERSCAPES and its fellow FP7 project EUBORDERREGIONS organised a joint conference in Bergamo, Italy, that addressed a wide range of border-related issues. The Conference entitled 'Mapping Conceptual Change in Thinking European Borders' was organised in Bergamo, Italy, in early July 2013. It not only presented ongoing research activities within these two large-scale international projects to the wider public, but also engaged numerous scholars external to the projects in a dialogue that addressed conceptual, methodological and empirical issues related to borders and border crossings. Organised by the University of Eastern Finland, in close cooperation with Ce.R.Co. (Centro di Ricerca sulla Complessità at the University of Bergamo), the conference aimed to make a constructive contribution to debate within border studies by encouraging a processual reading of borders as well as showcasing border research as an interdisciplinary field with its own academic standing. The conference also employed the concept of *borderscapes* as a way of approaching bordering processes in specific geographical and social contexts, both in borderlands but also wherever a specific border has impacts, is represented, negotiated or displaced.

Whether it was the topic at hand, or the exceptionally beautiful location in Bergamo, the organizers were faced with a large number of paper proposals that eventually had to be limited due to the size of the conference venue. What was first envisioned to be a smallish project conference grew into a quite sizable event – or a series of events, to be precise, of 134 participants. In addition to the actual conference, an internal project workshop as well as an open summer school was organized. The conference was kicked off with a get-together event that took place at GAMEC (Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea), where participants were able to enjoy a travelling exhibition 'The Memory of the Sea. Objects Migrating within the Mediterranean'. This was then followed by a screen-

ing of 'Mare Chiuso/Closed Sea' (2012), a touching film by Stefano Liberti & Andrea Segre.



Johan Schimanski comments on Piet den Blanken's atmospheric photograph of the German-Polish border, taken shortly after reunification in 1990.

The next day, following the opening words by Stefano Paleari, the Rector of the University of Bergamo and the conference organisers, the floor was given to Elena dell'Agnese, who delivered the eye-opening first keynote on 'New Geographies of Border Landscapes'. As the second keynote, Henk van Houtum pushed the borders of border-mapping even further with provocative arguments in favour of a 'C/artography of Borderscapes'. These thought provoking lectures set the tone for 22 parallel sessions focusing, inter alia, on:

- post-Soviet borders and conceptual change;
- borders, intersectionality and the everyday;
- borders and critical geopolitics of neighbourhood;

- the state of the debate in border studies: theories and methods;
- Europeanization: European integration and conceptual change;
- post-colonial bordering and Euro-African borderscapes;
- border-crossing and cultural production;
- cross-border cooperation and regionalization processes;
- rebordering state spaces: cities, borders and integration processes;
- policies and practices of cross-border cooperation;
- post-conflict borders and the emergence of new borderscapes.

In all, the presented papers clearly showcased that concepts of border have indeed undergone significant changes during the last decades. After the somewhat premature attempt to 'think away' political borders in the early 1990s, contemporary approaches solemnly acknowledge the continued relevance of borders for politics and everyday life. The conference uncovered important connections between borders as a 'challenge' to national (and EU) policies and borders as potential elements of political innovation through conceptual (re-)framings of social, political, economic and cultural spaces. As a number of papers indicated, this requires a nuanced and critical re-reading and understanding of borders as resources

in terms of the exercise of power, the management of conflict, cross-border cooperation, and the everyday negotiation of borders by 'ordinary' citizens and non-citizens. The presented papers will be developed into an edited volume as well as a journal special issue in order to disseminate the findings more broadly. A number of working papers will also be uploaded onto the project webpages.



Bergamo conference dinner

On behalf of the organisers and the University of Bergamo, the host institution, we wish to thank everyone for their contributions and making the conference a truly enjoyable experience. We also hope to see you again in Israel in December 2014, where the next EUBORDERSCAPES conference will take place!

antiAtlas of Borders: A Conference and Two Exhibitions

by CÉDRIC PARIZOT, JAMES SCOTT, ANNE-LAURE AMILHAT-SZARY and many others (with the help of Ruben Hernandez-Leon for English translation)

The *antiAtlas of Borders* conference was celebrated in Aix-en-Provence 30 September – 2 October 2013. The event brought together people who have dealt with borders as researchers, artists, mappers, border-crossers and writers. During the colloquium it was clear that disciplinary boundaries virtually ceased to play a role in the overall conversation – discussion was much more focused on understanding the multifarious consequences of thinking about borders in traditional state-centred, static and securitised ways. The *antiAtlas* project is itself an invitation to conceptualise borders as fuzzier and more tenuous than we have been accustomed. The idea that borderlines and their fixation on maps signify order and control – and a degree of permanence does not square with the reality of clandestine crossings and the evermore sophisticated attempts to securitise borders and societies is itself ways as well as conceptualising borders.

Two exhibitions form part of the results of this project, one which took place concurrently in Aix and one which can be visited in Marseille between December 2013 and March 2014.

Cédric Parizot, coordinator of the project, and his colleagues explain the rationale behind the *antiAtlas*: 'Making an atlas of borders means to experience stability or at least to give the illusion of stability. Setting the world in (right) order through maps is both a social and political process. So, why conceive an *antiAtlas* of borders? Is it simply to create disorder? Our project may deceive both active partisans of order as well as internal enemies and partisans of disorder who look for innovative insights. Our project aims at a collective exploration. Talking about an *anti-Atlas* of borders first means that systematic graphic visualisation of borders is not the most acceptable and desirable way of understanding borders. We do not contest the usefulness of maps as scientific tools, but we do challenge the very idea that systematic compiling of cartographic data embellished by comments may provide us adequate knowledge of borders.'

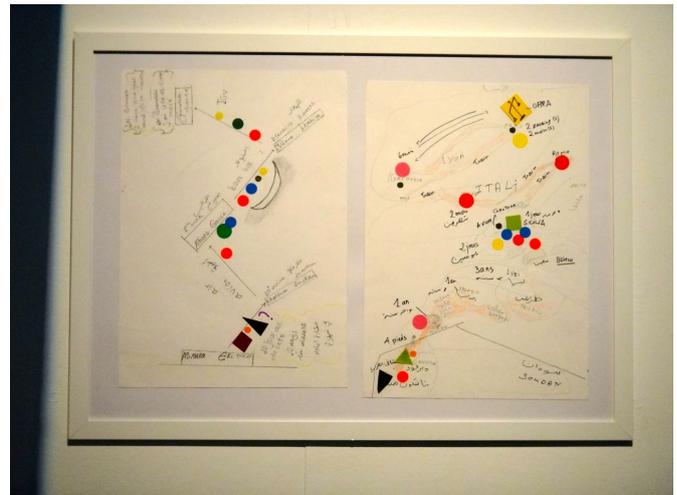


Discussion session at the antiAtlas of Borders conference

‘What is at stake is thus to understand the border as a perpetually changing process rather than as a simple place. *Atlases produce a static and stable synthesis while an antiatlas produces a dynamic and critical analysis.* Initially conceived as an exploratory research project, the *antiAtlas of borders* has become a performance in the artistic meaning of the word. The fact that researchers, professionals of border control, and artists have met each other for ten seminars between 2011 and 2013 has of course allowed them to enrich their own approach. In addition, this has also led to uncommon transdisciplinary experiences through which original works have referred to borders as they are lived: this has been the case when producing video games and films on the basis of anthropological observations, when managing participative

cartography, etc. Moreover, artistic works have provided many explorations and experiences of our ambivalent relation to borders – one on side, what they make of us, of our identity, of our intimacy, of our body, etc.; on the other side, what do we make of them, how we give them material and immaterial visibility or invisibility, how we play with them, either for freeing of them, or for surveying and denouncing our contemporaries. To sum up, the main goal of this antiAtlas of borders is to understand the evolution of our political relation to space and to examine our common destiny.’

To read the antiAtlas Manifest go to: http://www.antiatlas.net/Manifeste_EN.pdf.



At the antiAtlas exhibition: maps of lived border crossings across the Mediterranean

Observations from EUBORDERSCAPES on ‘Europeanisation’

by HANS-JOACHIM BÜRKNER,
HEIDI FICHTER-WOLF & EWA NIEDZIALEK

Over the past months, Workpackage 4 of EUBORDERSCAPES has become intensely involved in explorations of bottom-up modes of Europeanisation. At a first glance, this appears to be paradoxical. In public opinion, Europeanisation and the idea of European integration have mainly been communicated as a formal top-down endeavour, rather than something that might be included in local social practice. For example, top-down understandings of Europeanisation have been seminal to EU border-related policies and funding schemes. However a closer look at recent developments at EU internal borders reveals that regional and local stakeholders have engaged in tacit steps of emancipation from pre-fabricated images and ideals of Europeanisation, and in a multitude of trial-and-error activities.

This observation has made WP partners choose the German-Polish border region, among others, as an empirical case which easily indicates shifting local perspectives

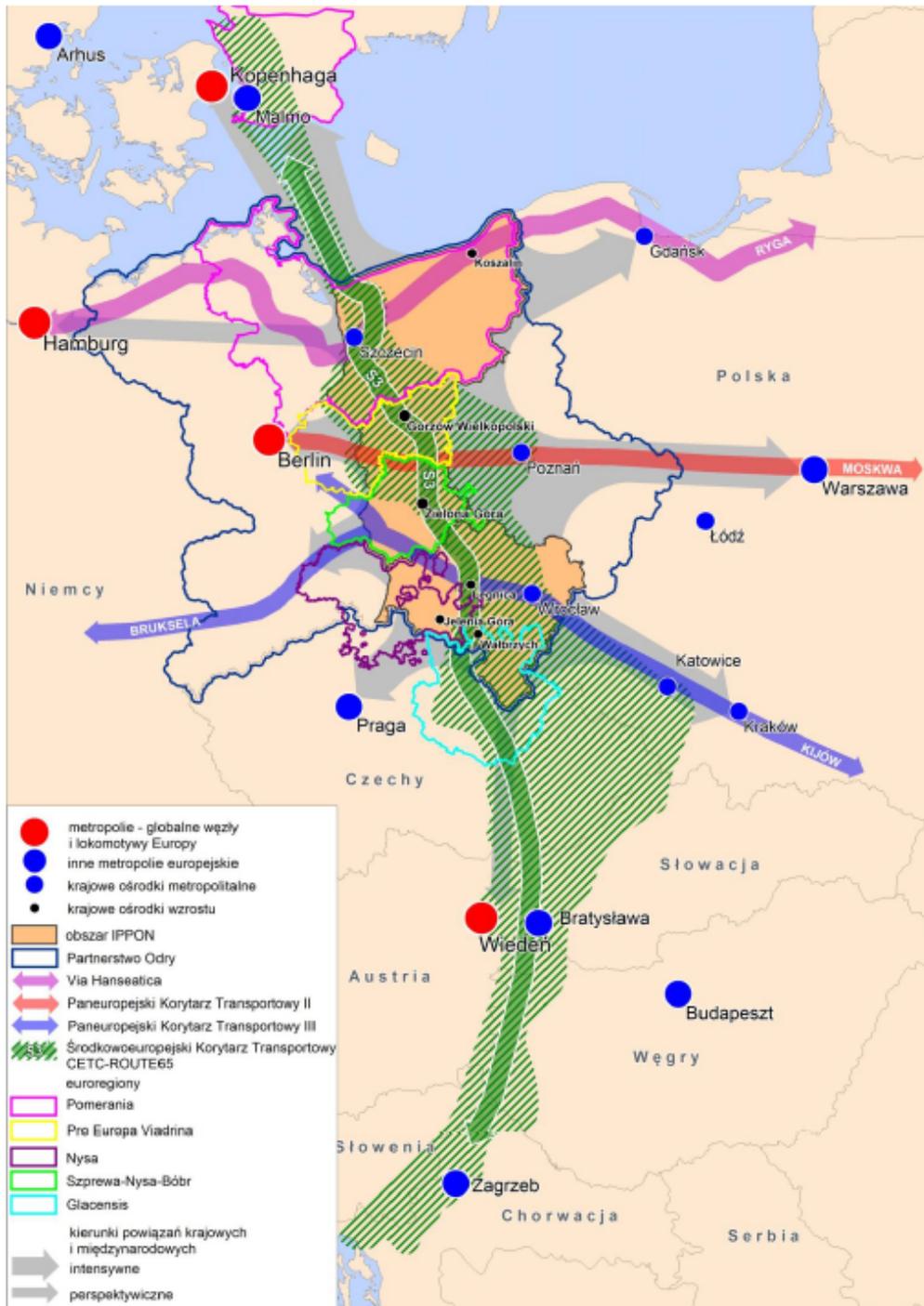
on the border region. Europeanisation and cross-border regionalisation have become visible here as contingent and unpredictable phenomena. They display a logic and temporal rhythm of their own, sometimes pushed forward by individual stakeholders, sometimes remaining almost untouched in a waiting state.

The case study region is presently established as a subject of study in a dual way: On the one hand, interviews with stakeholders in German-Polish twin cities will be made which will help identify networking routines in discourse in cross-border cooperation and local placemaking. On the other hand, a number of minor collateral studies has been started in order to detect informal re-conceptualisations of the border region and their gradual formalisation via institutionalisation. One of these studies focuses on the historical county of Lebus, located north of Frankfurt/Oder and Slubice. The historical implications of a formerly “border-transcending” region have been brought up by stakeholders on the Polish side in order to develop a new approach to regionalisation and to local development. In spite of the disruption of re-

gionalist thinking during the Cold War, these stakeholders try to detect traces of a previously strong social and structural regional unit, increasingly introducing historical references and related images in planning and policy documents. There is a process of bottom-up institutionalisation under way which originated in the Polish part of the border region yet always aims at also integrating the German part. In this way an autonomous perspective on future regional development has come up among 'Lubusian' (Polish) stakeholders: with regard to local

agency and interregional connectivity, "Berlin" has conceptually drawn increasingly closer than 'Warsaw' (see Map below).

Up to date, this micro-level mode of Europeanisation has almost gone unnoticed by a larger national and European public. WP 4 has defined it a task to draw public and academic attention to its discontinuous and often erratic nature, and to the dynamism of potential and controversy it involves.



A local (Lubusian) re-conceptualisation of Central Europe: Conceptual proximity replaces metrical distance.

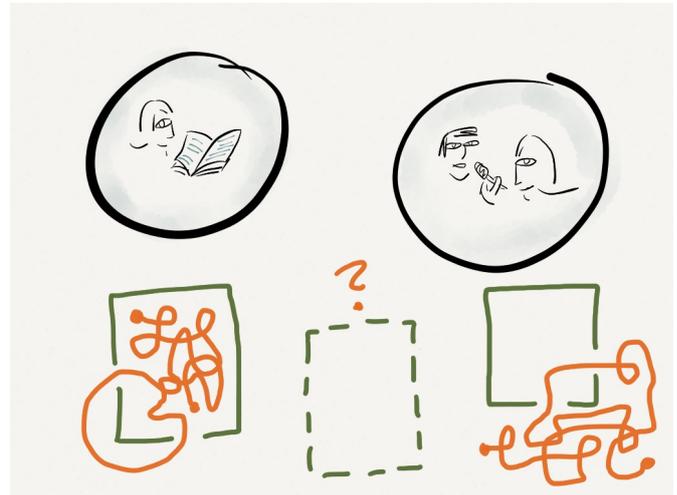
WP 10: (Cultural Production) and employing the Borderscapes metaphor

by JOHAN SCHIMANSKI

The EUBORDERSCAPES project does not intend to – nor could it – monopolise the term ‘borderscapes’, a term that must be understood as a broader metaphor and indicator of conceptual change in border studies rather than as an academic ‘trademark’. EUBORDERSCAPES’ Workpackage 10 (Border Crossings and Cultural Production) is in the midst of a rich discussion of methodological approaches with which to relate institutional forms of art/literature/film as well as popular artistic expression to conceptual innovation in the ways borders are understood and represented.

There is an unavoidably wide variety of disciplinary approaches within the WP (including both ‘immanent’ and ‘transcendent’ analyses of cultural production) that will necessitate the elaboration of a ‘contrapuntal’ rather than purely comparative methods of integrating research results. Certain cross-pollination of methods is being debated, such as the potential use of field interviews by humanities researchers and of cultural analysis by social sciences researchers, along with already initiated cooperation with established/informal artists. We have agreed to the ‘borderscape’ concept actively in our research, in

addition to the already established concept of ‘bordering’. Various underlying oppositions (reference/address, self-expression/aesthetics) have been articulated in those processes, along with the need to keep in consideration the role of memory (routes/roots) and of audience reception as a horizon of possibility for artworks.



Caricatures(!) of humanities and social sciences approaches to analysing works of art, literature and popular culture

New EUBORDERSCAPES Working Papers available online

Two new working papers authored by members of our project consortium are now available for downloading on the website (www.euborderscapes.eu).

Nira Yuval-Davis has written an excellent thought piece entitled ‘A Situated Intersectional Everyday Approach to the Study of Bordering’. In this paper, she develops concepts of bordering (i.e. social boundary-making) from the viewpoint of a situated, intersectional and everyday life practices approach. Yuval-Davis’ paper starts off by developing an epistemologically situated perspective, starting with issues of situated knowledge and then moving also to situated imagination – something that since the publication of Anderson’s (1983) classic *Imagined Communities* is recognised as central to the study of boundaries and borders. It then moves to examine issues related to the application of an intersectionality research approach and continues with the elaboration of the ‘everyday life’ approach to such research. The last section of the paper before the short concluding methodological comment examines an interdisciplinary approach to the notion of ‘bordering’, encompassing both various constructions of individual and collective relationships between ‘self’ and ‘non-self’ which are part of the inclusion of social identities in the study of bordering to some of the elements emphasised when studying geographical and state ‘border work’. As Nira Yuval-Davis argues, the

analysis of bordering as part of everyday life situated narratives and practices is part of a wider turn within contemporary social theory which implies (Schatzki 2001: 1) ‘a shared understanding of practices as embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity’ and thus a focusing on practices as the place to study the nature and transformation of their subject-matter. Ben Anderson (1998) has called this methodological approach ‘the inverted telescope’ – using micro-scale everyday bordering practices to both conceptualise and visualise what borders are at a more general level. By using this methodological approach within a situated intersectional epistemological perspective, it could be possible for our research project to construct a dialogical performative analysis of the multi-vocal, mutually constitutive, shifting and contested meanings of contemporary bordering processes in Europe, whether in metropolitan areas or in borderlands.

Cathall McCall’s Working Paper, which has now also been published in the journal *Space and Polity* (see below), deals with ‘European Union Cross-Border Cooperation and Conflict Amelioration’. As McCall suggests, the relevance of European Union (EU) cross-border cooperation for European border conflict amelioration may be questioned in the contemporary global climate of threat and insecurity posed by forces of ‘dark globalisa-

tion'. Furthermore, empirical evidence exposes the limitations of cross-border co-operation in advancing conflict amelioration in some border regions. Nevertheless, in an enlarged EU which encompasses Central and East European member states and reaches out to neighbouring states through cross-border co-operation initiatives the number of real and potential border conflicts with which it is concerned has risen exponentially. Fortunately, this WP also indicates that there are cases of EU 'border-scapes' that have adopted a cross-border 'peace-building from below' approach leading to border conflict ameliora-

tion. Unfortunately, countervailing pressures on EU cross-border co-operation from border security regimes (principally Schengen), the Eurozone crisis, EU budgetary constraints, the conceptualisation of 'Europe as Empire', and the possible reconfiguration of the EU itself compromises this approach. Therefore, the path of European integration may well shift from one of inter-state peace-building and regional cross-border co-operation after the Second World War to border conflict and coercion in constituting and reconstituting state borders after the reconfiguration of the European Union.

Upcoming Events

ABS World Conference

9–13 June 2014, Joensuu (Finland) – St. Petersburg (Russia)

The Association for Borderlands Studies (ABS) invites proposals for individual papers and posters as well as complete panels and roundtables related to multidisciplinary study of borders, border areas and cross-border interaction. Contributions from all world regions are encouraged. The organising theme for the 2014 World Conference is: *Post-Cold War Borders: Global Trends and Regional Responses*.

The general theme encompasses a wide range of topics and approaches. Please consult the conference website for inspiration. We invite proposals that focus on empirical research and case studies, conceptual and theoretical issues, and/ or policy relevant aspect of border studies alike. For further information, updates regarding the conference, and to download forms for submitting proposals, please see the conference website at: <http://www.uef.fi/abs2014world>.

Submission deadline for complete panels/roundtables: October 31, 2013

Submission deadline for individual papers/posters: November 30, 2013

Please send your proposal to abs2014.secretariat@uef.fi

The Association for Borderlands Studies 2014 World Conference is organised by the VERA Centre for Russian

and Border Studies at the University of Eastern Finland in cooperation with the Centre for Independent Social Research and the European University at St. Petersburg. The organisers wish to thank ABORNE – The African Borderlands Research Network and the Finnish Association for Russian and East European Studies for their financial and scientific contribution.

ABS Secretariat at Joensuu

As of September 2013 the Executive Secretariat of the Association for Borderlands Studies (ABS) is located at the Karelian Institute of the University of Eastern Finland (UEF). After many years of excellent work by the previous secretariat led by Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly at the University of Victoria (Canada), UEF will seek to develop ABS as a major international association that is geographically inclusive, thematically open and active in promoting international research in border studies. We will also seek to facilitate the participation of PhD students and post-graduates in comparative research. At the Karelian Institute, the host institution for the Secretariat is the VERA Centre of Russian and Border Studies. With its high international profile and wide research networks the VERA centre is well placed to enhance globally the standing and membership base of ABS. The day-to-day work of the Secretariat is managed by James W. Scott (Executive Secretary), Jussi Laine (Treasurer and Vice Executive Secretary) and Tatjana Lipiäinen (Managing Secretary).

New EUBORDERSCAPES Publications

Cathall McCall (2013) 'European Union Cross-Border Cooperation and Conflict Amelioration', *Space and Polity*, 17 (2), pp. 197–216. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13562576.2013.817512#.Uhs71200y5s>

Xavier Gallardo and Henk van Houtum (2013) 'Europe without an endpoint. Period', *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 104 (2), pp. 243–9. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/tesg.12013/abstract>

[tesg.12013/abstract](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/tesg.12013/abstract)

Anne-Laure Amilhat-Szary (2013) 'Le « conte de deux frontières » : que nous dit la différence des voisinages frontaliers américains ?' (A "tale of two borders": what do we learn from the different North American border neighbourhoods?), *L'Information géographique*, Vol. 77, pp. 13–25. http://www.cairn.info/resume.php?ID_ARTICLE=LIG_772_0013