



AUGUST 2014, No 3

# EUBORDERSCAPES Newsletter

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## Spring and Summer 2014: Brief Observations on EU geopolitics in a tense international situation

During 2014 much has happened around us with an important bearing on the work of EUBORDERSCAPES. The Ukraine crisis and tensions between Russia and the EU have certainly reminded us of the enduring political and cultural significance of borders. We have also witnessed a semi-renaissance of realist geopolitics in which Cold War divisions have been reanimated by Reagan and Bush-era designers of statecraft. Two prominent articles by Robert D. Kaplan in Spring editions of *Atlantic Monthly* and *Time* treated us a new repackaging of Mackinder's and Kjellén's old story that 'you just can't ignore geography'.

All of which reminds us how easy and convenient it is to ignore context and to neglect processes of social change. One of the comforts of geosimplifications such as Kaplan's is that while they hold a small element of truth they also tend to reify an 'eternal enemy' and provide a clear-cut vision of how the geopolitical world works. What is hidden from view is society and social change. When we think of territorial conflicts in the post-Soviet space we must also, among other things, be cognisant of asynchronous and asymmetric processes of nation-building, the significance of ethnopolitics, the development of civil society and the needs of local communities.

The EU has attempted to assume a stabilising role in post-Soviet context and it has done much to engage local societies there – but not enough. By focusing too much attention on border management and security, by delaying prospects of visa-free mobility and by applying often onerous conditionalities on Ukraine and other eastern neighbours, the EU has perhaps inadvertently created a tension between idealistic notions of regional partnership and very much territorially obsessed visions of EUrope. Indeed, one might argue that the EU has not communicated properly with Ukraine at the same time that it has misunderstood Russia. Much could have been done after the Velvet Revolution to create a sense of non-binding commonality between the EU and Ukraine and thus provide greater freedom of movement for all actors in the region.

This is not to condone the use of force in settling territorial issues. There is no substitute for dialogue, negotiation and the respect of international law. However, condemnation of re-bordering through military force is not enough. In order to create a true sense of partnership with its neighbours, the EU must do more to understand social and political concerns and to promote a positive engagement with local communities, not just national elites.

## Project Meeting and ABS Conference in Joensuu

by JUSSI LAINE

The EUBORDERSCAPES consortium met for its fourth project workshop in Joensuu, Finland. This meeting coincided with the Association of Borderlands Scholars first World Conference, which was held both in Finland and Russia, 9–13 June 2014. The EUBORDERSCAPES consortium, as well as members of the sister project EUBORDERREGIONS, organised several panels for this confer-

ence covering various aspects of our work (see Chiara Brambilla's piece below).

This first ever ABS World Conference is the first truly globally oriented event sponsored by the Association for Borderlands Studies. The conference was organised locally 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. ABORNE – The African

Borderlands Research Network and the Finnish Association for Russian and East European Studies contributed both financially and scientifically to the conference.



*Tarja Cronberg, member of the Finnish Green League and former member of the Finnish and European Parliaments, addresses the ABS Conference in Joensuu.*

ABS World brought together more than 450 border scholars from 64 different countries, giving ample evidence of the thematic expansion and increasing diversity of the research field. Panels were organised in Joensuu (Finland) and St Petersburg (Russia) and participants were treated to a cross-border excursion through the Karelian Isthmus, a highlight of which was a visit to the city of Vyborg. Founded in 1293, Vyborg can claim a rich Swedish, Finnish, Soviet and Russian history which still characterises the city today.



*ABS Conference in Joensuu*

The ABS World Conference did not aim to initiate yet another competing border conference series among dozens of established and high profile events. On the con-

trary, the idea is that by offering a forum for a regular global gathering of border scholars, it will help structure the field and facilitate the development of more thematically and/or geographically specific meetings and conferences and, in this way, strengthening the overall profile of border studies internationally.



*EUBORDERSCAPES project members at the conference*

The Association for Borderlands Studies, which is now located institutionally at the University of Eastern Finland, aims to provide important linkages among scholars around the globe. The ABS world conference is a practical example of working towards this goal. Having a broader conference not tied to any specific country or continent is expected to bring new possibilities also to those living outside the United States, where the ABS Annual Meetings are held.

The ABS World aimed to bring together various border studies networks to discuss issues of common concern. Welcome was by no means limited to academics only; the world conference, as well as the association as a whole, was open to policymakers, diplomats, law enforcements agencies, non-state actors, artists and many others alike.



*Vyborg, a Karelial city with a multicultural history*

## Questioning the Integration Process

by CHRISTOPHE SOHN & FRÉDÉRIC DURAND  
CEPS, Luxembourg

### Dimensions of cross-border integration

The research conducted within the framework of the EUBORDERSCAPES Workpackage 8 (Rebordering State Spaces: Cities, Borders and Integration Processes) has led to reconsiderations of cross-border integration processes. In the academic literature, the concept of integration is often treated in a compartmentalised way (economic, social, political or spatial integration), and it frequently appears linked to the interactions that have developed between territories, notably economic ones.

Recent research has nevertheless demonstrated that spatial integration is not limited to interactions only but that phenomena of convergence and territorial homogenisation can also play a role in bringing territories on either side of a border in closer contact. A. Decoville et al. (2013) distinguish between three models of cross-border integration: integration by specialisation, by polarisation and by osmosis.<sup>1</sup> These results also bring to light some of the rationales at work in the integration process. The intensity and direction of cross-border exchanges seem to be correlated to existing differentials between territories (notably those concerning labour and housing markets). In those cases in which cross-border relations are strongly asymmetrical, they produce an integration that maintains and even amplifies territorial disparities. In cases of greater equilibrium territorial convergence tends to occur.

In addition, in the field of border studies, cross-border integration is generally presented in a rather linear and sequential manner. These views do not, however, take possible changes into account (the closing of a border, hardening of international or regional relations, loss of mutual confidence of actors, changes in political strategy) that could alter and even reverse the dynamic of integration. Nor does such an approach consider the different potentials and degrees of integration between territories, or the volume and effective intensity of cross-border exchanges.

Thus, the analysis of cross-border integration remains a delicate question. Cross-border integration thus results as much from the symmetries and similarities between areas that make up cross-border regions; as from the asymmetries and existing differentials on either side of a border.

In order to overcome ambiguities and misunderstandings linked to the process of cross-border integration, the idea is to deconstruct the concept to specify its characteristics. Four dimensions appear (see table below), each one is developing in parallel with their own dynamic:

The *structural dimension* presents the spatial features of cross-border spaces. It allows an analysis of complementarities, of dynamics of convergence or divergence between territories. On the other hand, it expresses the connectedness of territories through communication networks.

The *functional dimension* is linked to cross-border flows, in the economic activity, but also to the socio-spatial practices that take part in the formation of a cross-border living area.

The *institutional dimension* is characterised by the action of cooperation, highlighting the networking of actors and their involvement in cross-border cooperation, but also the setting up of strategies and cross-border planning and policies.

Lastly, the *ideational dimension* regroups a variety of more subjective elements that are linked to individual and collective representations: sharing the same social and political references; developing a sense of belonging to the same cross-border living area; elaboration of common images and symbols; artistic, cultural or media productions.

Taking these characteristics into account, cross-border integration should be redefined as a dynamic and multi-dimensional process of bringing territories closer together and strengthening social bonds by lowering the barriers associated with borders and by the development of cooperation between territorial systems. This process is also ever-changing: it is made up of diverse elements which develop independently of each other, following different rhythms and time-scales. Moreover, the impermanence of the process implies that integration does not necessarily represent progress or continuity. Some changes can engender a slowing down of the integration process. Nothing is fixed, nor established. Cross-border integration remains a perpetual and complex construction.

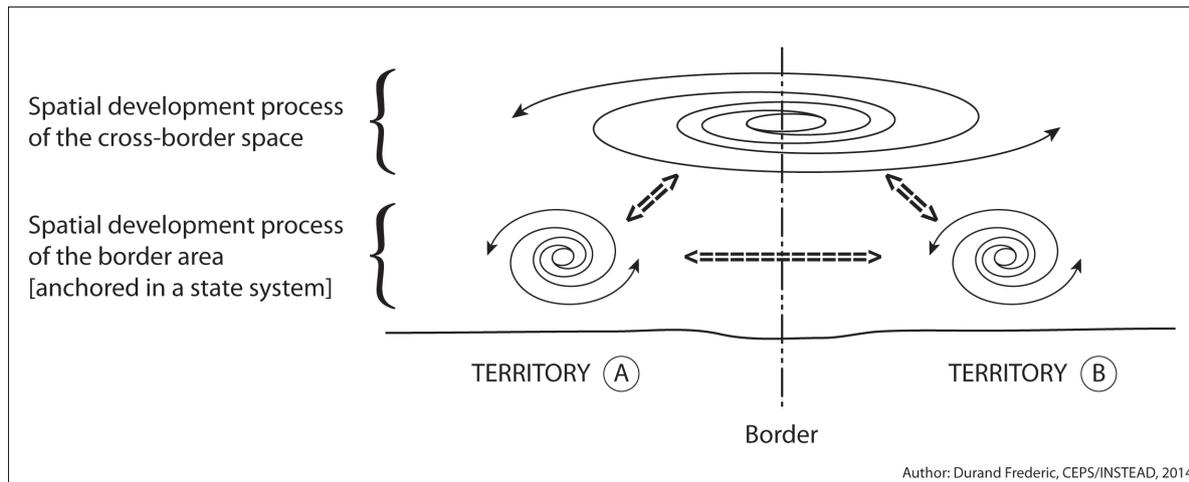
<sup>1</sup>Decoville, A., Durand, F., Sohn, C. and O. Walther (2013) 'Comparing Cross-Border Metropolitan Integration in Europe: Towards a Functional Typology', *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 28(2): 221–37.

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Explanations</i>
Structural	Organisation Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structuration of space and social composition</li> <li>• Dynamics of convergence or divergence of spatial development of territories</li> <li>• Communication networks planning</li> </ul>
Functional	Exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-border economic flows</li> <li>• Individual and collective spatial and social practices</li> </ul>
Institutional	Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encounters and networking of actors (political, economic, civil society, cultural milieux)</li> <li>• Structuration of cross-border collaboration</li> <li>• Willingness of actors to cooperate and define strategies and common projects</li> <li>• Cross-border planning and policies</li> </ul>
Ideational	Representation Creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elaboration of shared images and symbols</li> <li>• Sharing of the same cultural, social and political references</li> <li>• Adjustments of identities and sense of belonging to cross-border living area</li> <li>• Artistic and cultural productions, media treatment</li> </ul>

## Cross-border integration as a complementary process

In addition, cross-border integration is also seen as a complementary process which superimposes on other processes already operating within border areas. Studying cross-border integration needs to take into account the fact that border areas are spaces that are already structured and anchored in a specific state system (with their own history, culture and identity ; with precise laws, rules & mechanisms). We also need to consider cross-border spaces as a level at which a new living area is

constructed on both sides of a border. As the figure below shows, two logics of spatial development cohabit at two different scales, and engender problems at the level of the articulation of territories and their strategic orientations. The two spatial development processes mutually influence each other: on one side, the economic, social and political situation of a border area will shape the orientations for the spatial development of the cross-border spaces, while, at the same time, the cross-border question will inspire the territorial strategies formulated within a border area.



*A Transversal View of a Cross-Border Space*

Conceptualising cross-border integration mechanisms leads us to think in terms of a passage from a situation where border areas are simply juxtaposed with limited interaction, to the active construction of a cross-border space with complex links. Such links can potentially bring territories and their populations closer together. This transition implies that numerous changes must take place for institutional actors who have to artic-

ulate two interconnected dynamics together and redefine the management and the development strategies for each of these territories. This necessitates the organisation of spatial development which fits together between different scales of a territory on the one hand (local, regional, cross-border and national), but also between national territories on the other hand.

## 'Navigating Euro/African Borderscapes At and Across the Mediterranean' & 'Migration and Bordering In and Around Africa' – EUBORDERSCAPES Project Sessions at the ABS 2014 World Conference

by CHIARA BRAMBILLA

During the Association for Borderlands Studies 2014 World Conference (Joensuu, Finland & St Petersburg, Russia – June 9–13, 2014), the research approaches of WP 5 (Post-Colonial Bordering and Euro-African Borderscapes) and WP 10 (Border Crossings and Cultural Production) of the EUBORDERSCAPES project were presented in the session 'Navigating Euro/African Borderscapes At and Across the Mediterranean' organised by Chiara Brambilla (University of Bergamo). James Scott (University of Eastern Finland & coordinator of the EUBORDERSCAPES project) chaired the session and Rodrigo Bueno Lacy (Nijmegen Centre for Border Research) acted as a discussant. Chiara Brambilla (University of Bergamo) and Keina Espiñeira (University of Barcelona), who both participate in WP 5 and WP 10, presented their research work respectively titled 'Euro/African Borderscapes and Migrants' Political Subjectivities Across the Mediterranean: Counter-Hegemonic Cultural and Artistic Experiences from the *LampedusaInFestival*' and 'Shots

from the Spanish-Moroccan Border. Contested Visualizations of the Euro-African Borderscape' (paper co-authored with Xavier Ferrer-Gallardo and Abel Albet-Mas). Renen Yeziarsky (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev) presented the first shots of a video that the team of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, led by David Newman, is producing in the EUBORDERSCAPES project (WP 7 'Cross-Border Cooperation as Conflict Amelioration' & WP 10 'Border Crossings and Cultural Production') documenting the Israel/Palestine border by bringing children's perspectives to the foreground.<sup>2</sup>

In line with the general objectives and the rationales of WP 5 and WP 10, the session focused on the Mediterranean as a crucial space for investigating borders not as taken-for-granted entities exclusively connected to the territorial limits of nation-states, but as mobile, relational and contested sites, thereby exploring alternative border imaginaries 'beyond the line'. Taking the borderscape as an analytical angle that allows to consider borders as multidimensional entities, having different symbolic and material forms, functions and locations, the session in-

<sup>2</sup>Two other presentations were included in the submitted session: Luiza Bialasiewicz (University of Amsterdam), 'Re-making Borders, Re-making Regions: Governing Mobilities in the Straits of Gibraltar' and Filippo Celata and Raffaella Coletti (University of Rome La Sapienza), 'The "Stone Guest": The (In)visibility of Migration-Related Deaths in Euro-Mediterranean Policies'. Unfortunately, both presentations had to be cancelled.

quired into the Euro/African border nexus at and across the EU(ropean) external frontiers in the Mediterranean.

Through the borderscape lens, it is possible to grasp the 'variations' of Euro/African borders in space and time, transversally to different socio-cultural, political, aesthetic, economic, legal, and historical settings criss-crossed by negotiations between different actors, and not only the State. The borderscapes framework allows us to explore Euro/African borders in multiple ways: investigating the conceptual links between EU-internal, EU-external and non-European borders; examining the EU 'migration machine' as post-colonial Euro/Africa borderscape; questioning the 'normative dimension' of Euro/African borders while considering that borders also involve struggles that consist of strategies of adaptation, contestation and resistance, challenging the top-down geopolitical control of borders; interrogating the interaction of in/invisibility, space and power that each border regime entails reflecting peculiar de-territorialised politics of b/ordering; exploring the shifting borders of the EU 'neighbourhood' at the interface of borders dis-location and re-location from 'outside' Europe to 'within' Europe cityscapes as well as concerning new borderlands in Africa originated by the externalization of European borders; navigating cross-bordering and regionalization processes across the EU/non-EU divide.

The presentations were followed by a discussion that

highlighted the links between this session 'Navigating Euro/African Borderscapes At and Across the Mediterranean' and the ABORNE roundtable session 'Migration and Bordering In and Around Africa', organised and chaired by Paolo Gaibazzi (Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin) during the Conference. Chiara Brambilla (University of Bergamo) participated in the roundtable discussion exploring the migration-border nexus in and around Africa through the borderscapes lens. The intervention reflected on the critical potential of the borderscapes concept to (re)think the interplay between migration and b/ordering processes in and around Africa and considering the Euro/Africa border nexus in particular. The borderscapes concept expresses the (geo)political and epistemic multidimensionality of the border, enabling a productive understanding of the processual, de-territorialised and dispersed nature of borders and their ensuing regimes in the era of globalisation and transnational flows. This helps investigate the multiplication as well as the persistence of borders in and around Africa, thereby contributing to the analysis of the diffusion and stratification of borders moving away from the limits of nation-states through their dis-locations and re-locations that originate a complex interaction between processes and practices of border externalisation and internalisation.

## EUBORDERSCAPES at the ASEN conference

by JAMIE HAKIM

'How do you experience everyday state bordering in London?' is a question we asked those who attended a session on 'Bordering, Belonging and the Politics of Belonging' at the recent London ASEN conference. The range of reflective responses from a small group of multinational academics contrasted powerfully with the equally diverse responses of recent migrant interviewees and illustrated the timeliness of the developing interdisciplinary theorisations of borders and bordering that move beyond the linear, static and territorial and which accommodate the complexities of diverse past and present lives and imaginations.

The UEL/UMEA team are the lead partners of Work Package 9 of the Borderscapes project 'Borders, Intersectionality and the Everyday'. The central objective of the work package is to explore hitherto neglected areas of border research by addressing lived, intersectional and situated aspects of state borders using a range of ethnographic methods. These perspectives are being explored through a number of in-depth case studies, involving internal Schengen borders (e.g. UK/France), the external EU border (e.g. Finland/Russia) as well as metropolitan cities (London, Barcelona, St Petersburg). Media representations of different Roma communities are also being analysed in this work package.

In the 18 months that UEL/UMEA have been leading the work package a number of milestones have been passed, the most significant of which is the completion of the fieldwork around the Dover/Calais border. This has involved observation of everyday life in these areas as well as interviews with residents with different migration statuses, border crossers (including shoppers and ex-Eurotunnel employees), various state actors and other policy makers.

### Borderscapes and Bordering Processes

One of the most illuminating findings from the fieldwork has been the diversity of counter-hegemonic perspectives being produced on and in relation to the border which contrast with those which prevail in the media. This is particularly interesting given the dominance of the UKIP border discourse amongst all the mainstream political parties (including Labour) during the local and European elections that took place during the fieldwork. Similarly, there are tensions between the different policy makers all of whom have some sort of political investment in the making and re-making of the border. Overall the Dover/Calais borderscape is proving to be a far more heterogenous discursive space than common sense understandings of the territorial 'border' usually allow.

A theoretical point that is becoming increasingly apparent is that the border is not just the physical border at Dover/Calais. Rather the concept of the border can be seen to operate in a number of different dimensions. Different state and non-state agencies ensure that bordering processes happen far away from Dover/Calais with, for example, raids on businesses suspected of employing migrants illegally, the legal requirements that universities monitor and report the attendance of overseas students and the new rules that will compel landlords to check the immigration status of their tenants included in the 2014

Immigration Act. Borders also work imaginatively across time and space with people carrying past border experiences with them not only when they cross the border but also in their everyday lives. And, of course, borders are constructed differently depending on the situated gaze of the border crosser and of those working at the border.

UEL/UMEA will carry out the fieldwork in London from July to December 2014 and continue the analysis of the media representations of Roma in relation to bordering. During this time we hope to deepen and broaden the insights of the first 18 months.

## Upcoming Events

The poster features a background of a grey metal fence. At the top, there are logos for EUBORDERSCAPES, the SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME, and the European Union flag. The text on the poster reads: 'BORDERS AT THE INTERFACE: BORDERING EUROPE, AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST International Workshop'. At the bottom, it says 'DECEMBER 7-11, 2014 | Beer Sheva & Jerusalem ● Israel'. The Ben-Gurion University of the Negev logo is also present in the top right corner.

### **EUBORDERSCAPES Conference in Beer Sheva, Israel 'Borders at the Interface' 7–11 December 2014**

In its geopolitical context, Israel is located at the interface of three major regions – Europe, Asia (the Middle East part of Asia) and Africa. The region itself is the interface of regions, cultures and the world's great monotheistic religions, partly explaining the fact that it continues to be one of the world's geopolitical shatterbelts and the focus for ethnic, religious and territorial conflict.

As well as being an interface, it is also a transition region, where cultures and peoples have mixed as they cross from one area to another. It is as much as cross-border region as it is a border, and this is reflected in culture, language and food. Hybridity and meeting is reflected in notions of Eurasia and Mediterranean as alter-

native places for cultural mixing along with political conflict.

In cooperation with the FP7 consortium on Euroborder-scapes, the newly founded Geopolitics Chair at Ben-Gurion University, along with three dynamic research centers, the Herzog Center for Middle Eastern Studies, the Center for the Study of European Politics and Society (CSEPS) and the Tamar Golan Center for African Studies invite scholars with an interest in borders and in any one of the relevant regions to submit papers for an international workshop aimed focusing on the interface between the three regions. This will take place as part of the ever growing community of border scholars worldwide, ranging across the borders of the academic disciplines and examining the changing significances and functions of borders as they cross cultures.

For any questions please contact Renen Yeziersky.