EUBORDERSCAPES

Bordering, Political Landscapes and Social Arenas: Potentials and Challenges of Evolving Border Concepts in a post-Cold War World

EUBORDERSCAPES (290775), financed though the EU’s 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7-SSH-2011-1), is a new international research project that tracks and interprets conceptual change in the study of borders. The total budget of the project, which will run until May 2016, is 6.9 Million Euro. It is thus a large-scale project and the consortium includes 20 partner institutions from 17 different countries, including several non-EU members.

The EUBORDERSCAPES project studies conceptual change in relation to fundamental social, economic, cultural and geopolitical transformations that have taken place in the past decades. In addition, major paradigmatic shifts in scientific debate, and in the social sciences in particular, are also considered. Recognising the close interrelationships between social change and paradigm shifts, the EUBORDERSCAPES project analyses the evolving concept of borders in terms of a mutually linked emergence of ‘post-national’, ‘post-colonial’, ‘post-modernist’ and ‘post-Cold War’ strands of inquiry. State borders are the frame of reference, rather than ethnographic/anthropological boundaries. However, this approach emphasises the social significance and subjectivities of state borders while critically questioning ‘objective’ categories of state territoriality and international relations.

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EUBORDERSCAPES reflects different ways in which political and social borders condition our understandings of Europe. Accordingly, policy relevant aspects of the project involve different levels of political and economic agency and a variety of social spheres. They centre on issues such as the contradictions between security concerns, European values of tolerance and respect for cultural difference and tendencies towards national ‘consolidation’. The implications of borders and ‘bordering processes’ understood in political and socio-cultural terms have a direct bearing on the development of a greater sense of European citizenship and participation.

OBJECTIVES
EUBORDERSCAPES explores different areas of conceptual change that can be assumed to have concrete impacts on the ways borders both condition and are conditioned by different institutions and actors. In progressing beyond the state of the art, we therefore argue that important connections can be uncovered 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. 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. State borders also reflect and thus help us interpret tensions as well as points of connection within intercultural and interstate relations. In a very direct manner, these tensions are reflected in the practical consequences of controlling borders through security policies, border and visa regimes and immigration policies at the same time that global interdependencies require more forceful international co-operation.

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WORK PACKAGES
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- WP2: Empirical Framework
- WP3: The Reconfiguration of Post Soviet Borders and Conceptual Change
- WP4: Europeanisation: European Integration and Conceptual Change
- WP5: Post-Colonial Bordering and Euro-African Borderscapes
- WP6: Borders and Critical Geopolitics of Neighbourhood
- WP7: Cross-Border Co-operation as Conflict Amelioration
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- WP9: Borders, Intersectionality and the Everyday
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- WP11: Fieldwork Training and Methodological Development
- WP12: Case Studies and Fieldwork
- WP13: Cross-Sectional Analysis and Policy Considerations
- WP14: Dissemination
- WP15: Management