

International and interdisciplinary conference

**“B/ORDERS IN MOTION: Current challenges and future perspectives”**

15-17 November 2018 at the European University Viadrina, Frankfurt/Oder



**PANEL C2: Institutions of Migration Control: State Borders and the Diversification of Rights**

**Norbert Cyrus** (Frankfurt/Oder), Chair: **Dagmara Jajeśniak-Quast** (Frankfurt/Oder)

An important *raison d'être* of State Borders is the assigned function to protect a population against outside threats. In this view, mechanisms for the control of border-crossing movements of non-citizens appear as an indispensable requirement. Recently, some interest groups gained influence in linking social problems (like criminality, undeclared employment, unemployment) with weak border controls and gained support for claims to tighten border controls. Such claims presume state authorities' capacity to implement political requirements one-to-one. However, concrete contexts of institutional, legal, organizational and social frameworks inconsistently shape bordering practices. Factors such as the diversification of migrants' rights, the ambiguity of technological tools, the obstinacy of social actors, contradictions between influential interest groups and gaps in implementation induce non-achievement of border-related policy goals (with the consequence of harmful side-effects like deaths on the border and legal exclusion of migrants). The panel contributions explore implementation aspects of bordering practices and consider the implication of these findings for the development of less harmful approaches to protect a population against threats.

PANELISTS:

**Performativity and elasticity of border making: The case of Melilla**

**Estela Schindel** (Frankfurt/Oder)

Who and how determines what a border is and where a border ends? In spite of what the image of a fortified fence would suggest, the perimeter of the Spanish enclave of Melilla in North Africa is not a clearly demarcated borderline neatly separating two sovereign states but a much more complex social and political construction. In the everyday practices of both border guards and illegalized border crossers, as well as other actors active at this *borderland*, the geopolitical limit becomes elastic and porous and it is continually performed and contested. I will expose this on the basis of published testimonies and of interviews and observations conducted during a fieldwork stay in Melilla/Morocco in 2017. On a conceptual level, I will claim that borders are instances where, following Marc Salter and Giorgio Agamben, the sovereign contract is suspended and renewed. Therefore, not only the production of subjectivities but also the performative effects of the state nation are at stake.

## **The Central Mediterranean border as a humanitarian space: migration management between inclusion and exclusion**

**Paolo Cuttita** (Amsterdam/Kiel)

This paper explores the relationship of humanitarianism with processes of legal and territorial inclusion/exclusion at the EU border of the Central Mediterranean. First, I analyse the role of human rights in the institutional humanitarian discourse about migration and border management. Then I show that humanitarianism, while contributing to the discursive legitimation and spatial delocalization of exclusionary policies and practices, also contributes to a symbolically and legally subordinate inclusion of migrants in the European space. In doing this, I also analyse the work of humanitarian NGOs, and reflect on how the relationship between governmental and non-governmental humanitarianism has changed in recent years. More generally, I unpack the interaction between the different actors, logics, territories and legal regimes at play, to show what kind of a (humanitarian) space takes shape in this maritime region, and with what consequences for the people trying to cross from North Africa to Europe.

## **The city as border space**

**Margit Fauser** (Bielefeld)

Migration and border studies have pointed to key changes in the regimes of migration control. These include externalization beyond state's borders and toward third countries, involvement of private and non-governmental actors, and new internalization and localization. Borders have thus become reorganized across multiple scales and actors.

This institutional and spatial reorganization of the border concerns urban space and the city too. Here, it is result of recent devolutions and legal reform, local autonomy and discretion and long-standing and expanding tasks of local administrations and local non-state actors, especially in the delivery of services to migrants, all of which are interconnected with developments, discourses and policies on other scales.

This contribution is interested in understanding the local production of the border looking at approaches, practices and understandings of local agents in their street-level work in particular cities. To this end, the presentation will suggest a number of conceptual tools that aim at connecting urban migration research to border studies as a way to understand the re-spatialization of the border that concerns urban space. It will use some first empirical insights from case studies in German cities. In so doing, it sheds light on the emergence of the city as a border space.