

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 D2: Exploring the Formation of State Borders in History

Klaus Weber (Frankfurt/Oder), **Norbert Cyrus** (Frankfurt/Oder), Chair: **Jutta Wimpler** (Frankfurt/Oder)

Border Studies conceptualize contemporary state borders in two parallel strands: They look at them as entities either predominantly disrupting or predominantly enabling connections. While these two perspectives focus at the diverging aspects of migration control at the one hand and cross-border cooperation at the other, the synchronicity and the interrelation and interaction of various arrangements at one state border are neglected. As a rule, authorities do assign to state borders a combination of functions, disrupting some and enabling other connections the same time. A historical exploration of the occurrence of various functions of a state border may help to develop a more consistent understanding of state borders' features, and of the complexity of their arrangements. The panel will offer historical case studies of formations of city- and state-bordering practices that combine disrupting and enabling functions, with a focus on the historical emergence of border-related control of human mobility.

PANELISTS:

Modern Bordering Practices before Modernity

Andreas Fahrmeir (Frankfurt/Main)

This paper will explore to what extent the 'modernity' of contemporary bordering practices derives from the introduction of novel techniques (such as biometric databases), from the combination of techniques or from the issue of who controls their use or from the type of border (urban, regional, 'state' or others) they are used to police. It will thus deal with the history of 'papers', frontier controls and registers and also touch on the – somewhat unexpected – renaissance of typical pre-modern bordering practices such as the creating of walls.

Producing Borders. Separating Territories and Connecting Spaces in 19th-century Europe

Laura Di Fiore (Naples)

At the turn of the 19th century, the centralisation of public power in the developing administrative states in Europe determined a more marked territorialisation of sovereignty. A pivotal element in this process

was the increasing stabilisation and tightening of borders, from the 18th into the 19th century. Nevertheless, a historical analysis of the real border-creation processes and of the co-existence along borders of a number of cross-state and transnational areas allows to highlight how both European borders and borderlands were part of a more complex spatial configuration. An ongoing interaction between state institutions and social actors in the outlying areas played a central role in the formation and stabilisation of these spatial configurations.

Colonial and Local Concepts of Territorial Borders: The Case of 19th-century Afghanistan

Samad Sharif (Frankfurt/Oder)

The modern Afghan borders show classic patterns of arbitrariness. These borders had been dictated by the British and Russian colonial powers in the course of the Anglo-Russo Great Game of the 19th century. Negotiated in a series of treaties and agreements - partly with, and partly over the head of the Afghan rulers - the borders existing today oppose any local understanding of a traditional border. The concept of colonial borders, which were made particularly to safeguard British-India, was never compatible with the Afghan traditional and historical understanding of borders. Besides creating a range of political and social tensions, none of the colonial borders could ever be established in the mindset of the clans and tribes. Whether legal or not, in almost every Afghan border region, cross border relations have never ceased. While the conception of the British colonial borders can be mainly referred to as war frontiers, the local understanding of border zones is not only a social and political concept but rather a network of cultural and historical interactions. The paper explores both the colonial and the local concepts of the South-Central-Asian borders in the Anglo-Afghan relationship.

From Open Border to Thorough Control of Individual Mobility – the UK Border 1880-1920

Klaus Weber (Frankfurt/Oder), **Norbert Cyrus** (Frankfurt/Oder)

Until 1880, travelers crossed UK state borders without any control. Only forty years later, UK authorities had established a strict surveillance of the status of every person. The paper shows that this fundamental change was not triggered by the interest of state authorities but by civil society concerns. Particularly relevant were Jewish welfare organizations, which feared that a growing influx of destitute Jewish newcomers from Eastern Europe would deplete their financial resources - and that larger number of foreign Jews would cause a surge in Anti-Jewish resentments. The established Anglo-Jewish organizations responded with an introduction of non-state migration controls at crucial points of passage: ports and railway stations. The financial means of arriving Jewish passengers and their health were examined. Those not meeting the standards were urged to return. Ironically, these activities provided arguments for those who demanded state authorities to replace the more open regime, actually preferred by the wider public, by a regime of strict migration controls. The case illustrates how

complex interaction between social actors and state authorities shape the formation and arrangement of state borders.