



Networking / Dissemination Activity Scientific Report Form

Form (Word or PDF file) to be completed and uploaded via the online system within two months of the completion of the event for the following activities: working group meetings, seminars, workshops, symposia, conferences, summer schools, training programmes and specialised courses (graduate-level and continuing education), EUROCORES programme invited sessions at larger conferences, working group meetings (e.g. publication meetings).

a) Summary

It should provide a general picture of the meeting and describe the practical organisation / general arrangements. It should also summarise the scientific objectives and agenda of the meeting and the overall conclusion(s).

The invited session “Encounters with difference in European borderlands” was convened by Bas Spierings and Martin van der Velde, members of the Unfamiliarity CRP of the EuroCoreCode-program. It was part of the 12th “European Culture” Conference in Barcelona which took place from 24-26 October 2013 at the Universitat Internacional de Catalunya (UIC) and was organised by the Charlemagne Institute for European Studies which forms part of the university. The conference had 240 participants from 40 countries from both inside and outside Europe. More than 225 papers were presented.

The session was organised to further disseminate the main ideas and outcomes of the EuroCoreCode-program in general as well as to contribute to the ongoing conceptualisation of the Unfamiliarity-project in particular.

The call for participation was centred around the European Union’s discourse to promote cross-border mobility and community building through the removal of physical borders between member states. As stated in the call, despite such endeavors, mental interpretations of international differences still have important implications for daily life and especially for people living close to border or in ‘borderlands’. Borderlands provide many opportunities for encountering differences, including social, cultural, political, economic, physical and natural ones. Although their interpretations seem to be rather dynamic, they can be quite stable at the same time, as they may have strong historical roots. Via everyday encounters, differences with ‘the other’ and ‘the other side’ of the border are being (re)negotiated in a relational manner.

Papers were invited that explore, from a variety of angles – both theoretical and empirical –, how differences are being (re)negotiated in cross-border contexts, including strategies used to deal with difference in a variety of settings – e.g. when travelling to ‘the other side’ of the border and when living, working and recreating there.

Ten papers were finally submitted. The EuroCoreCode-members contributed with five papers, three from members of the Unfamiliarity-team, one from the Cuius Regio-team and one from the Saints-group. The other five were delivered by scholars from outside the EuroCoreCode-program

Although the format of the conference made it somewhat difficult to have major discussions during the sessions, the presentations and short questions afterwards have furthered all of us in our conceptualisations. And we are convinced to have contributed again to the dissemination of the EuroCoreCode-project

b) Final programme of the event

The invited session consisted of three separate sub-sessions on the Friday afternoon from 14:15 until 19:15. In total 10 presentations were scheduled. Unfortunately in the third sub-session one presentation had to be cancelled due to illness of the presenter.

The sub-sessions consisted of the following presentations.

Session 34 – Special section : "Encounters with difference in European borderlands" (G105)
Bas Spierings & Martin van der Velde: Shopping in borderlands and encounters with (un)familiarity (*Unfamiliarity*)
Carsten Yndigegn: Borderwork and social change – the protectionist national discourse (*Unfamiliarity*)
Risto Järv: Borders in stories: Seto region and border narratives

Session 43 – Special Section "Encounters with difference in European borderlands" (G105)
Job Weststrate: Coping with confessional conflict. Religious border-crossing in the Lower Rhine area during the 16th and 17th century (*Cuius Regio*)
Ildikó Csepregi: The travelling of saints and differences in their cults in Medieval Europe (*Saints*)
Hans-Joachim Bürkner: Transborder living in the German-Polish border region: local irritations, intercultural re-positionings and collective normalisation
Ivana Venier: Everyday Practices Along Croatian State Borders: Conflicts, Social Practices and Border Uses

Session 52 – Special Section "Encounters with difference in European borderlands" (G105)
Alice Buoli: EUro-Mediterranean borderlands: Interplays of spaces, networks and practices
Dorte Jagetic Andersen: Encountering the Uncanny - Reflections on feelings of (un)familiarity in former Yugoslav border practices (*Unfamiliarity, Canceled*)
Elisabeth Boesen, Gregor Schnuer & Christian Wille: We, you, the others. Constructions of difference and identity in the Greater Region

c) Description of the scientific content of the event (abstracts can be provided)

It should provide a detailed picture of what went on during the meeting: brief summaries of presentations, synopsis of subsequent discussions (agreements/disagreements/highlights).

In the first presentation Bas Spierings and Martin van der Velde (*both from Unfamiliarity*) first of all summarised the goal of the special session and the broader framework of the 'Unfamiliarity-project from which this initiative originated. Next some empirical results were presented. From this came that many differences can be encountered when shopping in European borderlands. Other languages, unfamiliar goods and unknown codes are only a few of the differences that could cause exciting and stimulating situations but could also be perceived as problematic and deterring. The presentation analysed perceptions, motivations and practices of cross-border (non-)shoppers and provided insights into ways in which borderlanders deal with differences on both sides of the border. The aim was to both theoretically and empirically unravel dynamic and relational aspects of the '(un)familiarity' concept, with a focus on shopping (im)mobility in the Dutch-German Rhine-Waal Euroregion. As such, 'familiarisation processes' in the Dutch-German

borderland were discussed. It included a plea for more instead of less borders as markers of differences which could promote cross-border mobility and interaction.

Carsten Yndigegn (*Unfamiliarity*) introduced the Euroregion in the Danish-German border region which was used to demonstrate the process of bordering nation-states by political activists. Two central concepts, unfamiliarity and borderwork, were used to address the mental categorisations that are created when people are confronted with the foreign, specifically in cross-border interaction and the processes of border constructions that are performed by individuals in daily interaction. It was demonstrated how the interplay between unfamiliarity and borderwork may contribute to explain the resistance towards formal cross-border interaction. Further, it was shown how a long historical legacy of political cleavages may still be activated in discourses of national distinctiveness, stereotypes, otherness, and borders. The case was contrasted with the development of a predominantly right populist border discourse in the recent decade. It demonstrated how a classic local-cosmopolitan dichotomy has been transformed in an age of globalisation, world migration, and supranational network society. This analysis is supported by an explanatory frame with five discourse positions: Globalisation and Great Migrations as historical archetypes, borders as iconographic security, nations as symbolic homes, and space as ontological identity constituents.

Risto Järv, in the final presentation in the first sub-session, elaborated on the divided territory that is inhabited by the orthodox Setos, forming a border territory both in Estonia and in Russia. The region met a new situation in the 1990s when the major part of the Seto area remained on the other side of the Estonian border, thus requiring visas to visit it. His focus was in particular on how the topic of the border and problems related to the border have cut into his other folkloristic fieldworks (2004–2006). The representations of neighbours and the border were discussed as well as the ethnic stereotyping emerging from the interviews.

Job Weststrate (*Cuius Regio*) in his presentation sought to explore the regional ramifications of the confessional struggle for Guelders and the Lower Rhine area. These areas suffered heavily during the Revolt, since they became the military frontier from the late 1580's onwards. It has been suggested that during the late middle ages and early modern period the eastern parts of the Netherlands and the German Lower Rhine territories were to a large extent coherent in terms of religiosity. An often cited example is the spread of the religious lay movement of the *Devotia Moderna*, that originated in the IJssel towns of Oversticht and spread largely in the areas along the river Rhine, from the late 14th century onwards. It was inferred that during the sixteenth century the rise of protestantism in Guelders was part of a 'Lower Rhine' Reformation rather than a Holland-oriented Dutch Reformation. In the presentation it was explored how the religious orientation has been of three towns on the frontier – Arnhem and Nijmegen in Guelders, and the town Cleves in the neighbouring duchy of Cleves – using some empirical data on the assignment of ministers in the Reformed congregations of their towns. By tracing their places of origin and education, and, if possible, their positioning in Calvinist theological quarrels of the early seventeenth century, the development of the regionally oriented Reformed Church in the frontier area of Guelders-Cleves was illustrated.

Ildikó Csepregi (*Saints*) presented some of her work on the formative role that religious devotion and the cult of saints played in medieval European culture, especially in Central Europe. Encountering a holy person, worshipping a saint posthumously, becoming a member of a pilgrim group or a community under the saint's patronage are personal experiences that unite the individuals into a cultural community and give them a new group identity. The presentation illustrated with some historical examples some elements of this process. Focussing on the question of borders, both physical and immaterial as well as on the issue of the differences in the definition and self-definition of these group identities, she outlined what happens when the cult of a holy figure becomes established along the lines of regional and national categories: local cults, dynastic saints, patron saints. Secondly she discussed how such cults change when the cult moves e.g. when the living saint himself/herself moves to another region or country or when several countries fight for the saint and his/her spiritual heritage and identity-forming capacities

Hans-Joachim Bürkner discussed the issue of transborder mobility and cross-cultural assimilation in particular in a context of post-socialist transformation. In this context expectations towards cultural rapprochement are often assigned to the need for assimilation to the economically weaker partner. This opinion is challenged by rapidly rising wealth levels of the population in the “poorer” parts of transnational border regions. The recent case of border-crossing living and commuting by Polish middle class stakeholders in the German-Polish border region was taken as a point of reference for systematic reflections about status-oriented intercultural encounters. Based on a targeted analysis of local media discourse, he identifies the starting points and the following ramifications of interpretations given by German local collectives of the socio-cultural change happening close to them. The empirical findings are supposed to contribute to the debate on the social construction of borders by offering a more focused interpretation of bordering in terms of power differentials and socio-cultural image hierarchies.

Ivana Venier, in her presentation aimed to draw attention on what is actually happening along Croatian border areas in terms of everyday life. With Croatia becoming the 28th Member State of the European Union the length of the European external borders increased. One of the peculiarities is that the Croatian borders – except that with Hungary – are of very recent establishment, dating back to the collapse of Yugoslavia. Notwithstanding that, they still allow the movement of people living in different countries. Inhabitants of border regions continue to exchange and interact through everyday social practices, different border uses, commerce, and even conflicts. Ivana presented three border cases or “stories” – the case of a Croatian policy with effects in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the conflict between Croatia and Slovenia about their sea border, and the case of Vukovar, a divided city. She discussed these cases in light of some specific research questions. Which is the most appropriate way to research and address borders? What are the challenges that everyday situations and practices pose to the EU's aim of opening up internal borders and strengthening the external ones?

Alice Buoli in the first presentation of the third sub-session drew attention to borderlands as sites of a multiplicity of spatial and social practices, relations and narratives, informed by trans-scalar and transnational processes, where different actors, communities and institutions interact. She used the EUro---Mediterranean space as a crucial “magnifying glass” on the EU external relations with third bordering countries, where a complex interplay of shifting borders, global / local actors and networks are at stake. Her presentation aimed specifically at analysing the role of everyday, informal and (often) fragmented and hidden cross-border practices and interactions. A small number of borderlands, at the intersection between the EU and the south-eastern shore of the Mediterranean, were addressed according to two interpretative perspectives. First the physical dimension of borderlands and secondly the relational dimension of cross-border interactions and networks, linking different actors and institutions at different scales. Also the European rhetoric on and about cross-border cooperation was challenged from a critical viewpoint.

As mentioned, the presentation by Dorte Jagetic Andersen (*Unfamiliarity*) was cancelled because she fell ill. She would have discussed the concept of (un)familiarity to illustrate how the practical confrontations with otherness articulated in politically charged spaces of bordering, using the Freud's concept of the ‘Uncanny’. The main question would have been what is at stake in relation to feelings (un)familiarity by way of everyday experiences from regions in the former Yugoslavia, which was until recently influenced by violent conflicts.

Gregor Schnuer (using a co-authored paper with Elisabeth Boesen and Christian Wille) challenged the empirically preoccupation to use a range of binary oppositions relating to the border (e.g. majority – minority, inclusion – exclusion). Using the example of the “Greater Region,” a borderland involving Luxembourg and surrounding Germany, France, and Belgium it was shown that this is often insufficient. He presented the results of a quantitative survey of Luxembourg residents and residents of the surrounding border-regions, and the results of qualitative interviews. This way it was shown how achieved and ascribed identities in the region no longer align with a ‘simple’ binary based on national differences. Instead more complicated processes of othering (and likening) occur, drawing on multiple categories, including local and national identities/histories, spatial interactions, and social status.

d) Assessment of the results and impact of the event on the EUROCORES programme.

It should describe what was gained from the meeting. Concrete or follow-up actions to be taken as a result (i.e. dissemination plan) should appear in this section.

The main aim of this event was to further disseminate the final results of the Eurocorecode-program to a larger audience and further strengthening the cross-CRP exchange of ideas. Both goals have been achieved. Next to three presentation delivered by members of the Unfamiliarity-team, there were two presentation from the other teams in the EuroCoreCode-program The meeting contributed to the Cross-CRP-nature. Also the five 'external' presentation infused the EuroCoreCode members with new ideas and approaches, which can be beneficial in the final stages of each of the projects. Also a larger audience was reached. The afternoon session were well attended with a good audience of 20 to 25 people. Although the format of the conference made it somewhat difficult to initiate a thorough discussion, the questions that were raised made clear that the central theme of the session has stimulated the participants in their thinking on this specific topic.

e) List of speakers and participants

Name and affiliation are sufficient. The detailed list will be uploaded online directly.

Alice Buoli: Department of Architecture and Urban Studies (DASU) Politecnico di Milano, Italy
Hans-Joachim Bürkner: Leibniz Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning
Ildiko Csepregi: Central European University Budapest, Hungary (*Saints*)
Dorte Jagetic Andersen: University of Southern Denmark (*Unfamiliarity, had to cancel due to illness*)
Risto Järv: Estonian Literary Museum, Estonian Folklore Archives
Gregor Schnuer: Université du Luxembourg
Bas Spierings: Urban and Regional Research Centre Utrecht, Utrecht University (*Unfamiliarity*)
Martin van der Velde: Nijmegen Centre for Border Research, Radboud University Nijmegen (*Unfamiliarity*)
Ivana Venier: School of Doctorate Studies, IUAV University of Venice, Italy
Job Weststrate: University of Groningen, the Netherlands (*Cuius Regio*)
Carsten Yndigeegn: Department of Border Regions University of Southern Denmark (*Unfamiliarity*)