Workshop 29
The Ethnography of Borderlands

Convenors:
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This panel will consider national borders in the literal (geopolitical) sense and in terms of the cultural and social categorisations that adhere metaphorically to these borders. This means, firstly, an exploration of borderlands as social, political and economic spaces that receive their dynamics both from the reality of the borders and from personal relationships transcending borders (involving regional histories and cultures). Secondly, this entails scrutiny of the ways that social categorizations (like 'citizen', 'native', 'refugee', 'stranger') are ascribed and embodied among people inhabiting the social landscapes surrounding borders. In view of this, we invite papers addressing one or more of three related fields of enquiry:
1. How the unity of borderlands (seen as cultural and historical regions) poses a challenge to state boundaries and to state-led strategies of categorization and control.
2. How the social practice of migration (forced or otherwise) figures in the life histories of people living in the borderlands.
3. How borderlands, involving the interface between two or more marginalized spaces in terms of state influence and state amenities, often are alive with practices and agents of "shadow economies". Especially in situations of violent conflict, these transnational networks of politics and economy are part of the mainstay of everyday life and it is important that they receive our attention.

At the Margins: Social Exclusion of the Manjo in Sheka Society, Southwest Ethiopia
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When borders have to be fiercely defended, reinforced and constantly recreated, one begins to contemplate the possibility of their actual fluidity. In the paper, the phenomenon of constant reiteration of social and bodily boundaries will be examined by looking at the Shekacho in southwest Ethiopia and their social organisation - often referred to as a "caste system." The main focus is an outcast group of hunters, who live in the border territory between the town and the forest. Their geographical location reflects their liminal position in the social order, where they occupy the lowest rank and are perceived as an ambivalent category: neither entirely human, nor animal. The paper

examines how the process of marginalisation, of constructing social borders on the basis of strict food regulations, has become an integral part of group identity formation in the region. By historically analysing the shifting geographical borders in the region, the paper attempts to understand how this might have affected and changed the internal differentiation of the former Sheka kingdom. In this context I will also investigate the increase of ethnically phrased movements of minorities in the Sheka zone as a form of boundary negotiation and opposition to the Shekacho hegemony.

The Border from "Above" and the Borders from "Within": A Case Study of Palestinian Refugees in Gaza

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While Palestinians are living within borders constructed by Israeli State policy, there are also borders within the society. A case study of Palestinian refugees in Gaza will highlight the social categorisation within Palestinian society as well as the influence of external factors like the Palestinian Authority, Israeli policies and the consequences of the policies of international organisations. Although life circumstances have changed dramatically, social classes and traditional social structures are still viable and there is (after more than 50 years of co-existence) a differentiation between the host-society and the refugees. Why these concepts of identities and group boundaries are retained in most contexts, but also blurred in other cases will be illustrated through life histories.

The question will be raised how female refugees' survival strategies interrelate with their social and religious networks. Which are the most influential forms of impact exerted by the local culture, i.e. the cultural spheres of refugees and of the host society? Furthermore, the role of the culture and politics of the host society for the refugee condition will be a crucial issue in this paper. Finally, it will be explored how these different factors interact in the construction of social groups and personal identities.

Schleswig - an Ethnographic Region?

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The historical duchy of Schleswig has formed a political entity since the incorporation into the Danish monarchy in 1721. With national awakening in the 1800s, both Danish and German movements claimed Schleswig for their respective nationstate agenda, both arguing with the concept of the duchy's ethnographic unity and historical indivisibility. In consequence, the duchy has posed a challenge to state boundaries resulting in two wars and a controversial division in 1920. Public debate on the establishment of a Euroregion Schleswig in the mid-1990s

proved that the concept of the borderland's unity still can be conceived as a challenge to the state boundary by parts of the public as well as some political actors.

The paper will discuss the usefulness of a concept of ethnographic unity for the promotion of cross-border cooperation aimed at the creation of integrated, trans-national border regions, in contrast to stateless strategies of categorization and homogenization, especially with regard to the national minorities existing on both sides of the 1920-border. A comparative analysis of the case study of the Schleswig border region with other advanced crossborder regions should provide empirical evidence on advancing theoretical knowledge on cross-border cooperation as an aspect of regional European integration.

Negotiating Home and Identity Across the Border "Road" of the Aegean Sea: Lives of Elders who Forcibly Migrated to Chios, Greece in 1922

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This paper examines the lives of elders of Greek ethnicity who, as children in 1922, were among thousands of people forcibly expelled from their homes in Asia Minor. This event, which was called the "Catastrophe" by Greeks, marked the end of thousands of years of significant Greek presence in Asia Minor. Many of the survivors moved to nearby Greek islands, the Greek mainland, and other areas they could reach by sea. Drawing upon videotaped ethnographic interviews with eighteen elders who moved to the island of Chios, this paper will examine the lifelong processes by which they negotiated their new "homes" and identities in their new physical landscape across the border of the Aegean. It will examine their various memories of their "home" land across that border, the ritual and symbolic means they used to preserve their memories of their birthplaces, and also the continuous lifelong processes by which each negotiated an identity along a continuum from that of Microsiotis (person from Asia Minor) to Chiotis (Chios islander). Finally, it will consider how their ongoing experiences of interaction and social categorisation by the Chios islanders factored into their developing sense of home and identity across the border.

"We Used to Be so International": Everyday Cross-Border Relations at the New EU Border Facing Russia

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The disintegration of the Soviet Union created borders between states in places where there had been administrative borders between Soviet republics. In the process, important economic

ties were cut, flows of labour force changed directions and functioning economic areas became peripheral 'back pockets' of the respective nation states. The paper examines current cross-border interaction and movement in one such case, the Baltic borderland area where Estonia, Latvia and Russia meet. The borders in question have in 2004 become the easternmost borders of the European Union and NATO borders facing Russia. In the current situation local inhabitants' traditionally flexible borderland identities and practices are not welcomed by the states in question.

The new stricter border regimes and border-crossing formalities have an enormous importance on many local people's lives. In the paper I focus on those borderland residents who for various reasons need to and want to cross the EU-Russian border frequently. Who are these "everyday border-crossers"? How and why do they go to the other side? What kinds of ties do they maintain or develop? Such questions have been explored through participant observation of local people's actual border crossings and individual and family visits to the adjacent region in the neighbouring country.

The Wagah Syndrome: Territorial Roots of Violence in South Asia

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In South Asia the location of the international borders between India, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Burma is highly contested. Three types of unresolved border dispute (McMahonian, Radcliffian and Kashmirian) have ensured that these borders remain locations of considerable violence today. This paper, based on an ethnography of the India-Bangladesh-Burma border, explores some of the forms that this borderland violence takes. It examines flash points (where borderland populations become victims of military confrontations between two states), pushbacks (where unauthorised immigrants are deported by forcing them back across the border) and the denial of citizenship to borderlanders (where a state refuses to allow its 'own' borderland population full citizenship status). The paper argues that territorial ambiguity and violent borderlands have produced a South Asian form of aggressive territoriality based on frail sovereignty (the 'Wagah syndrome') with far-reaching consequences for relations both between South Asian states and between each of these states and their own citizens.

Buddhist Marginal Cultures in the Thai-Malaysian Borderland

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The paper is concerned with marginal Thai-Buddhist culture in the border zone of Thailand and Malaysia on the East Coast

between Tagbai and Tumpat, with the everyday practices of the shadow economy in the Buddhist order and in the negotiation of ethno-cultural personhood. These are marginal Buddhist cultures in Muslim societies, yet related across the border. There is also a lot of smuggling across the border going on. Some Thai people have two identity cards by registering their children back in Tagbai. Violence is rampant.

Buddhist monasteries in Tagbai often changed territory from Thailand to Malaysia and back to Thailand. Tagbai is located in a Buddhist nation-state, while Tumpat is located in a Muslim state (Malaysia). Kelantan is the stronghold of the Islamist party PAS and there is a lot of debate on the reproduction of Thai Buddhist identity in the context of Islamization among the Buddhist monkshood.

The Thai Kelantan monks react to the pressure by revitalising their networks with Buddhist associations in Malaysia, Buddhist foundations in Songkla, with politicians and embassy as well as the Buddhist Sangha in Thailand. Buddhists temple networks and imagined pilgrimage routes thus form an imagined moral community that criss-crosses and questions political boundaries.