

# Borderscape as an Interdisciplinary Concept

*Call for Papers*

Symposium 8/9 April 2016, Luxembourg



□ FACULTÉ DES LETTRES, DES SCIENCES HUMAINES, DES ARTS ET DES SCIENCES DE L'ÉDUCATION

'MIS – Multilingualism and Intercultural Studies' ([www.mis.lu](http://www.mis.lu)) is a key research area at the University of Luxembourg dealing with sociocultural practices and discourses as contact zones of languages and cultures. Temporal and spatial displacements are of central concern to that research as are processes of border formation and demarcation. The notion of *borderscape* has been proposed to investigate these phenomena and will be critically assessed in an interdisciplinary conference organized by MIS on 8 and 9 April 2016.

Borders are not given by nature, but are instead socially produced and constantly (re)defined, maintained and defended. To put it more precisely, borders can be described as being both the result of and the reason for differentiations and can therefore be thought of as purely procedural ('bordering'), shaping the identity of the categories hence delimited, determining what they are and what they become. Borders imply a regulative frame, subject to constant change, within with – or contrary to which - they can be transgressed. Often, borders expand to form border regions which can be investigated as transition areas and contact zones. This description is only valid for territorial or political borders, but also applies to cultural, social, economic, legal and linguistic borders and to the borders of texts and other artefacts.

The term *borderscape* has recently been coined to emphasise that borders are shaped by an ensemble of regulations, semantics and other practices and discourses and – in a manner of speaking – *constitute* this dynamic dispositif. The notion is used by analogy with the term *landscape*: as *landscape* provides land with a cultural framework, so does *borderscape* encompass the culturally constructed nature, dynamism and changeability of borders. Although *borderscape* was coined precisely to question still-dominant concepts of territoriality, research in the Social Sciences mainly uses this term to describe geopolitical connections shedding light on interactions between different (affirmative and subversive) forms of border control and various types of social or cultural formations, discursive processes and individual identity policies.

MIS proposes to extend the meaning of *borderscape* even further, not only relating it to borders 'as such', but instead in a more abstract and far-reaching way to their very conditions of their formation. This enables the term to be used across disciplines, whenever domains are being differentiated. It relates not only to politically defined territories and powerful

spheres of influence but also to the borders of what is permitted, culturally and socially prohibited or artistically justifiable, the borders of artworks, buildings or concepts, or the borders given by individuals and grammars.

It is our contention that the abstractness of *borderscape* and the process of *borderscaping* renders the concept operational for the fields of research mentioned above and many others. The conference aims to sound out its potential for theoretical and conceptual discussion, as well as for empirical research into border phenomena. We would thus like to invite papers dealing with conceptual considerations relating to *borderscapes* and/or specific case-studies that demonstrate how border formation can be investigated and described in various areas. The symposium is aimed at colleagues across the Humanities and Social Sciences who are interested in the functionality of borders in social, cultural, geographic, artistic, literary and psychological contexts.

Proposals for papers should be submitted by 30 November 2015 to [mis@uni.lu](mailto:mis@uni.lu) and include the following items:

- Title of the paper
- Name, institutional affiliation, postal address, email
- Abstract (max. 1 000 characters incl. spaces)
- Bibliography if applicable
- Biographical information (max. 350 characters incl. spaces)

Proposals may be submitted in German, French or English. The conference will provide interpreting services (German to English; French to English).

Reimbursement is available for travel and accommodation expenses.

Contact: [mis@uni.lu](mailto:mis@uni.lu)

**Scientific Committee:**

Dr. Till Dembeck, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sonja Kmec, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Birte Nienaber, Agnès Prüm, Prof. Dr. Nathalie Roelens, Dr. Christian Wille

Conference organised by the Key Area MIS – Multilingualism and Intercultural Studies (University of Luxembourg) in cooperation with the UniGR-Center for Border Studies (UniGR-CBS).