

Mobilities, Borders and Identity Research Group

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The Research Group on Regional Transformation (RGTT) that has been working at the Department of Geography in Oulu University for almost two decades has established a new interdisciplinary Research Group on *Mobilities, Borders and Identity* (MBI). This is closely related to the “Culture, Interaction and Identity” -theme which is one of the four major Research Focus Areas at the University of Oulu. MBI-group will support and promote both the University’s focus and current research in the Department. The key themes of the MBI Research Group will be the relations between regional transformation, mobilities, territorial boundaries and identity, which is related to a number of topical interdisciplinary research themes, such as immigration, security, biopolitics and the “technologization” of governance and the surveillance of population/territories.

Previous research in the RGTT has concentrated on developing both theoretical perspectives and empirical approaches for an analysis of the social construction of territories and (political) borders, identity politics and mobilities, especially tourism. Anssi Paasi has been working with Kaj Zimmerbauer and Ph.D. student Joni Vainikka on such themes as globalization, boundary producing practices, region-building processes and regional identities/ideologies. Jarkko Saarinen has studied tourism mobilities, local cultures and identities and sustainability. He has been actively developing international intercultural interaction and research cooperation. Sami Moisio’s research focuses on regional politics/policy, European integration and the spatiality of state transformation. Among other themes, he has scrutinized various geopolitical topics in Northern Europe. Lauren Martin joined the Geography Department in 2011 as a postdoctoral fellow. She coordinates the MBI Research Group. Lauren has studied borders, immigration enforcement, and security practices in the US and is beginning a new research project (Technologies of Apprehension) on privatization and biometric surveillance in border governance. Further members include postdoctoral researchers Eeva-Kaisa Prokkola and Juha Ridanpää. Eeva-Kaisa has studied formerly state borders, cross-border regionalization and identities and is currently focusing on the technologies of border management in the EU and Schengen area. Juha’s research concerns the questions related to popular geopolitics, northern regions and postcolonial studies?

The MBI group has a long tradition in international cooperation and well established networks to researchers focusing on the European and US border regions, for example.

Research Group will continue the cooperation with international scholars through seminars, lectures, and collaborative projects.

In the fall of 2011, the MBI group will recruit a Ph.D. student that will develop further approaches that strive to overcome open/closed dichotomies of territoriality and will problematize borders and the processes of bordering and border-crossings. S/he could potentially scrutinize, for example, societal meaning-making in governmental practices that perpetually aim at making territories and mobilities across territories calculable and measurable, with the particular focus on border management and biometric border controls. Alternatively, s/he might study how the increasing mobility of human beings challenges new, increasingly open spatial constellations, and how mobile individuals experience and conceptualize borders. Similarly the identity narratives of mobile individuals can be analyzed and compared with wider cultural and political narratives of territorial national and international security. The PhD student will contribute to the empirical and conceptual-theoretical work of the MBI Research Group, support the previous work that has been done in the Department, and introduce novel perspectives to the study of territories, borders, territorial control, and identities.

Examples of recent publications by the MBI Research Group

Dittmer, Jason, Moisiu, Sami, Ingram, Alan & Dodds, Klaus: Have you heard about the disappearing ice? Recasting Arctic geopolitics. *Political Geography*, 30(5) (2011), pp. 202-214.

Hall, C. Michael and Jarkko Saarinen (eds). *Tourism and Change in the Polar Regions: Climate, Environment and experiences*. London: Routledge. (2010) 318 p.

Martin, Lauren. "The Geopolitics of Vulnerability: Migrant Families in U.S. Immigrant Family Detention Policy." *Gender, Place, & Culture*. 18(4) (2011): 477-498.

Martin, Lauren. "Constructing the Border Wall—The Social and Environmental Impacts of Border Mexico-US Border Policy," In Stanley D. Brunn (Ed.) *Engineering Earth: The Impacts of Megaengineering Projects*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer Science+Business Media, pp. 1701-1723. (2011)

Martin, Lauren. "Bombs, Bodies, and Biopolitics: Securitizing the Subject at the Airport Security Checkpoint." *Social & Cultural Geography*, 11(1): 17-34. (2010)

Paasi, Anssi: Bounded spaces in a 'borderless world'? Border studies, power, and the anatomy of the territory. *Journal of Power* vol. 2:2 (2009), pp. 213-234.

Paasi, Anssi: Regions are social constructs, but 'who' or 'what' constructs them? Agency in question. *Environment and Planning A* 42 (2010) 2296 – 2301

Johnson, Corey, Jones, Reece, Paasi, Anssi, Amoore, Louise, Mountz, Alison, Salter, Mark, Rumford, Chris: Interventions on Rethinking “the Border” in Border Studies. *Political Geography* vol. 30, (2011), pp. 61-69.

Paasi, Anssi: A “Border theory”: an unattainable dream or a realistic aim for border scholars? In Wastl-Walter, Doris (editor) *A Research Companion to Border Studies*. Aldershot: Ashgate 2011. pp. 11-31.

Paasi, Anssi: From region to space. In Agnew John A. and James S Duncan (eds.) *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Human Geography*. Oxford: Blackwell (2011). pp. 161-175.

Prokkola, Eeva-Kaisa & Juha, Ridanpää. Following the plot of Bengt Pohjanen’s Meänmaa: Narrativization as a process of creating regional identity. *Social & Cultural Geography* (forthcoming)

Prokkola, Eeva-Kaisa. Cross-border regionalization, INTERREG III A initiative and local cooperation in the Finnish-Swedish border area, *Environment and Planning A* 43 (2011) 1190 – 1208

Prokkola, Eeva-Kaisa. Unfixing borderland identity: border performances and narratives in the construction of self. *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 24 (2009) 21 – 38

Ridanpää, Juha. A Masculinist Northern Wilderness and the Emancipatory Potential of Literary Irony. *Gender, Place & Culture* 17:3 (2010), 319-335.

Ridanpää, Juha. Geopolitics of humour: The Muhammed cartoon crisis and the Kaltio comic strip episode in Finland. *Geopolitics* 14:4 (2009), 729-749.

Saarinen, J., Becker, F., Manwa, H. and D. Wilson (eds). *Sustainable Tourism in Southern Africa: Local Communities and Natural Resources in Transition*. Channel View, Bristol. (2009) 290 p.

Saarinen, Jarkko, Chris Rogerson and Haretsebe Manwa. Tourism and Millennium Development Goals: Tourism for Global Development? (Editorial, Special Issue). *Current Issues in Tourism* 14:3(2011), 201–203.

Timothy, Dallen and Jarkko Saarinen. Cross-Border Cooperation and Tourism in Europe. In C.Costa, D.Buhalis, E.Panyik (eds) *European Tourism Planning and Organisation Systems Vol. I*. (forthcoming)

Zimmerbauer, Kaj (2011). From image to identity: building regions by place promotion. *European Planning Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 243-260.