Spaces of Difference: Conflicts and Cohabitation

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The IRTG Diversity is the first German-Canadian doctoral training program in the humanities and social sciences. It is funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council Canada (SSHRC). Research within the IRTG focuses on paradigmatic changes and historical transformations in interpreting multicultural realities in North America (Québec and Canada in particular) and Europe (Germany and France in particular) since the 18th century. Through the transversal analytic lenses of politics, practices, and narratives, the IRTG investigates the mediation and translation of cultural differences in micro-, meso- and macro-level empirical constellations. By highlighting the dynamic processes that engender diversity, its analytical framework offers new perspectives for transnational and area studies as well as cross-cultural research.

IRTG Diversity
Mediating Difference in Transcultural Spaces

Ursula Lehmkuhl,
Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink,
Laurence McFalls (eds.)

Spaces of Difference:
Conflicts and Cohabitation

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Table of Contents

Part III: Becoming and Belonging

Part IV: Dynamics of Confrontation and Cohabitation

Spaces of Difference: Conflict and Cohabitation

Ursula Lehmkuhl

Introduction

Europe is facing a refugee problem of unprecedented scale. Millions of people are fleeing Syria, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, Somalia, Ethiopia, and other countries of the Middle East and Africa, where civil war, violence, religious and ethnic discrimination and poverty have created spaces of belligerence, enmity, and threat.[1] Western Europe and Sweden are the desired destinations, imagined as places of hope, safety, security, and future. In order to reach these imagined spaces refugees embark on life-threatening journeys. Thousands of refugees have died while trying to reach Europe by boat via the Mediterranean. Many refugees therefore have decided to travel over land. Since July 2015, the "Balkan Route" has developed into a fluid spatial zone, a human river, flowing through places and localities that interrupt but do not stop the swell: state borders, fenced and fortified with barbed wire; the so-called "Jungle," an area near a border, where refugees and migrants rest before attempting to cross the border (Amnesty 2015); refugee camps immediately behind the border and transit zones at the border or somewhere else (for an analysis of transit zones as deterritorialized spaces see Makaremi in this volume). On these sites refugees with different ethnic and religious background, border police and soldiers, humanitarian aid organizations and volunteer helpers interact and sometimes collide, thus creating ambivalent, often dangerous spaces of difference. In a study published by Amnesty International in July 2015, the Balkan route figures prominently as a spatial zone characterized by human rights violations, ill-treatment, exploitation, pain and hunger (Amnesty 2015).

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[1] This introduction has been written in late October 2015 during my fellowship at the Institute of Advanced Study of the University of Konstanz. I would like to thank the Cluster of Excellence "Cultural Foundations of Social Integration" for the invitation.

When we conceived the conference "Spaces of Difference: Conflict and Cohabitation" in March 2014 situations like the ones just described were hardly imaginable in Europe. Spaces of difference in Europe and North America were less noticeable, almost hidden places resulting from inconsistent legal and political practices, ambiguous cultural and literary representations, or veiled social practices of marginalization and exclusion. While recognizing the highly politicized, power-laden character of spaces of difference, we conceived spaces of difference following the arguments developed by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz (Ortiz 1917; Ortiz/Barreal 1991, 1993). We considered spaces of difference and diversity not only as highly conflictual and violent spaces but also as transcultural spaces in which difference is negotiated, mediated or even translated. We were interested in what processes of mediation and translation looked like and whether they are accompanied by processes of transculturation in the sense of transfer processes from one culture to another, not leading to acculturation but implying a certain loss or rearrangement of a cultural configuration, to use Ortiz's concepts "de-culturation" and "neo-culturation." How might transcultural processes generate a new common culture based on the meeting and the intermingling of different peoples and cultures? What are the cognitive and discursive patterns and the concrete social practices on the micro-, meso- and macro-level characterizing and stirring processes of transculturation? How can we systematize the multi-polar movements between different cultures and within cultural contact zones where spaces, cultures, and identities are subject to constant negotiation, mediation, and thus to change?

We were aware that questions like these tend to promote a romanticized perspective on spaces of difference by privileging the transculturation approach, which might seem harmonistic at first sight. With the focus on "conflict and cohabitation" we wanted to avoid a harmonistic approach and instead pinpoint the dual character of "spaces of difference," the violent and conflictual one and the banal, embodied or institutionalized one. While refugees in several Balkan countries and Hungary may face open human rights violations due among other things to inadequacies in the implementation of asylum laws, the incapacity to cope with the smuggler system, and the lack of resources to treat the refugees humanely, in Western Europe they are confronted with more subtle legal processes of rejection and repatriation (see Makaremi in this volume). In addition, in Western European societies xenophobic tendencies and practices are rapidly developing not only in right wing circles. Xenophobia has reached mainstream society and collides with a "welcoming culture" that has mobilized thousands of volunteer helpers in Austria, Germany and Sweden. Conflicts and frictions resulting from these inconsistencies and contradictions frame practices, politics and narratives of diversity and difference.

Taking into account this complex situation that Western European societies are currently facing, we think that the case studies and analyses presented in this volume come just in time. Based on primary and highly original historical, ethnographic or sociological research and with an empirical focus on Western Europe and North America, the contributions to this volume explore how spaces of difference are constructed, framed and negotiated. Although or maybe because we argue from perspectives of postcolonial studies and post-structural constructivist epistemologies, the analyses presented in this volume might help to trigger a debate that not only deals with the visible extremes of the creation of spaces of difference but is also concerned with the hidden and veiled everyday practices framing Western societies' action and behavior vis-à-vis cultural, ethnic, racial and religious plurality.

In the sense of a readers' guide to "Spaces of Difference," I will present some of the core concepts used in this volume to analyze cultural plurality and diversity. I will then explain the structure of the volume and point out core arguments and research results presented by the eleven contributions to this volume in order to demonstrate how spaces of difference emerge, are constructed or negotiated in Western Europe and North America. As the title of this book suggests, "space" is one of our core concepts, next to "difference" and "diversity." We are concerned with "translation" as social practice and we are interested in the multi-layered temporal and spatial character of the representation of diversity, including hidden histories, veiled frames and agendas, transnational movements and flows, and the inherent power structure of conflicts and cohabitation in spaces where different cultures, ethnicities, religions, races collide and create dynamic regimes of conflict and cohabitation.[2]

Space/Place

Our concept of space/place is informed by arguments and premises put forward in the debate about transnational spaces. With Arjun Appadurai (Appadurai 1991, 1996), Linda Basch (Basch et al. 2003), Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (Gupta/Ferguson 1992), Homi Bhabha (Bhabha 2004), Ludger Pries (Pries 2008) and Steffen Mau (Mau 2007, 2010) we argue that there is a plurality of competing spatial frameworks at any given time. We recognize the constructed nature of space as well as the simultaneity and fluidity of various spatial frameworks (Brun 2001; Faist/Özveren 2004; Finnegan 2008; Low/Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003; Pries 2001; Soja 1989; Wilton/Cranford 2002). Taking the arguments of regional geography and migration studies into account, we argue that spaces stand in reciprocal relation with the

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social actors who move with(in) them (Werlen 2009b, a; for a historical perspective see Hoerder 1998). Historical actors and historians, politicians and political scientists, social groups and sociologists all in their own way define and mediate spatial orders.

We analyze the relation between space, place, culture, and diversity by concentrating on the cultural meaning attributed to space by various social actors through their practices, politics, and narratives over time. This cultural meaning expresses itself in, among others, the material cultures that mark the specificities of the localities in which mediation and translation processes take place (see for this perspective especially Ferrari's and Härting's contributions to this volume). Such an actor-based approach allows the analysis of coexisting and rival claims about the cultural meaning, construction and appropriation of spaces. The focus on specific localities conceived of as sites of resistance, in which cultural hybridity, transcultural practices, and overlapping identities constitute counter-hegemonic practices and discourses, permits the deconstruction and the assessment of power relations that inform processes of mediation and the struggles that may result from them (Massey 1994; Ufer 2008, 2009).

Mediation/Translation

We use mediation and translation as categories of social action, as social practices structuring interaction in spaces of diversity (Renn 2002). We investigate mediation and translation primarily as pre-institutionalized strategies of conflict resolution and conflict transformation. Both conflict and cohabitation in spaces of difference very often are structured by translation processes. Failed translations can initiate conflicts as Nikola Tietze argues (see Tietze in this volume). Our approach to translation is informed by intercultural communication studies and the rather new field of translation studies (Bachmann-Medick 2009; Buden/Nowotny 2009; Bachmann-Medick 2004; for a sociology of translation see Renn 2006; Baker 2009). In intercultural communication studies, mediation denotes strategies for overcoming conflicts and misunderstandings that arise from linguistic and cultural differences with a specific focus on "critical incidents" (Hall/Hall 1983, 1987, 1990; Busch 2005). Empirically, however, intercultural communication often encompasses processes of cultural transfer or even cultural and conceptual translation that are not characterized by critical incidents but by flows and incremental change resulting from appropriation and rejection practices that are not immediately visible (Lehmkuhl 2004, 2006, 2009; Lüsebrink 2003, 2008). Hence, in addition to mediation, we need translation as a category of social action in order to capture the broad spectrum of action and behaviour characterizing processes of continuous interpenetration and

entanglement of different contexts, discourses, and social fields (Fuchs 2009; Venuti 1998) inducing transculturation and the creation of transcultural spaces.

Modes of Social Action: Politics, Practices and Narratives of Diversity

The contributions to "Spaces of Difference" discuss the construction of transcultural spaces and the representation and negotiation of diversity through the analytical lenses of three dominant modes of social action: politics, practices and narratives of diversity.[3]

Politics refers to conflictual social interactions that abruptly or gradually establish the preeminence of certain norms at the expense of others and implies processes of inclusion and exclusion, of defining majorities and minorities, and of institutionalizing rights (see the research program of the Cluster of Excellence "Normative Orders" Forst/Günther 2011). This definition of politics as a particular "moment" of interaction that leads either to the establishment, change, or destruction of social order is narrow in that it excludes whole fields of enquiry that political scientists typically view as political, namely policy, organization, and institutions, for we understand the latter to be practices that arise from the politics (and narratives) of diversity (see Schram in this volume). At the same time, this definition is broad in that the sites of diversity politics extend well beyond partisan and legislative debates, the mobilization and organization of interest groups, and the inclusion or exclusion of social categories in citizenship and the national community (Endreß 2006). By highlighting this omnipresence of the political across all types of social interactions and their concomitant disciplines, we do not wish to efface their specificities but to encourage research that appreciates the complexity of the social construction of diversity. The politics of mediating difference addresses, for example, critical events and conflictual processes of spatial appropriation through immigrant groups or previously marginalized social actors, e.g. Canada's First Nations. Addressing processes of mobilization, subjectivation and consolidation the analytical perspective of politics of diversity aims at answering among others the following questions:

1. How, when and through whom do different historically constructed markers of ethno-linguistic, cultural, religious, and gendered difference become politically mobilized in different spatial contexts?

2. How do mobilized values and identities enable or "empower" action triggering subjectivating processes that transform ethnic minorities, migrants and other marginalized actors into political subjects/objects?

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[3]   For an application of these three modes of social action to the analysis of "contact zones" and "liminal spaces" see volume 1 of the publication series Diversity/Diversité/Diversität (Lehmkuhl et al. 2015).

3. How do particular historical memories and memory politics contribute to processes of social and spatial differentiations and to their consolidation?

While politics refers to social interactions that reconfigure spaces of diversity most visibly in moments of rupture, *practice*s describe interactions that generally reproduce those configurations in a temporality of continuity. By examining day-to-day social interactions, be they habitual, instrumental, norm-bound, or affective, the investigation of practices of diversity seeks to identify how diversity becomes inscribed in the minds and bodies of social agents and in the topography of social milieu (Endreß 2004; Petersson/Tyler 2008; for an analysis of these practices in immigrant societies see Hoerder et al. 2003). Bourdieu's central concept of habitus offers one theoretical avenue for exploring how quotidian practices of distinction, including the carving out of spaces of diversity, are embedded in cross-cutting fields of apparently disinterested but in fact competitive social interaction (Bourdieu 1979). Following Michel de Certeau's critique of Bourdieu's panoptism and over-determination, the micro-sociological or ethnographic observation of the actors' "tactics" of daily life (see Poitras in this volume), including the re- or misappropriation of social spaces, can reveal the transformative potentials of pre-political practices of diversity (Certeau 1998 [1980]).

Cultural practices and formations of cultural identity are affected by the spatial representations of cultural meaning that surround social actors – their *espaces vécus* (Frémont 1976) – but also by the specific physical localities, the places in which their lives occur. Migrants, for example, transpose or transport practices and values of one social space into another social space and, after arrival, translate their ways to residents while, at the same time, trying to translate residents' ways of life into categories and interpretations familiar to themselves (see Wieczorek in this volume) (Hoerder 2004; Vertovec 2004). By focusing on modes of appropriation of social spaces and on everyday forms of embodiment of symbolic violence, we address processes of appropriation, affirmation, and institutionalization in order to answer questions such as:

1. In which ways do immigrant communities, "host" societies and their respective spokespeople appropriate specific physical and symbolic spaces of diversity?
2. To what extent does the stylization of "otherness" in intercultural interaction and dialogue and the attribution of cultural meaning to space nurture affirmations of difference, exclusion, and vulnerability?
3. How are daily practices of exclusion and inclusion, mediation and translation institutionalized and represented?

Both informing and arising from politics and practices, *narratives* refer to a communicative mode of social action producing and reproducing, altering, deconstructing or radicalizing the semantic repertoire and knowledge of a given community (Hoerder 1999, 2005). Narratives are mediated representations of diversity in fictional and non-fictional literature and films as well as mass media, including the internet, but also in scientific, philosophic, political, legal, or technical discourses (Klooß/Braun 1995; Hepp 2004; Vatter 2005, 2009; Hepp 2011). By analyzing narratives of diversity we aim at reconstructing how exactly diversity becomes a topic in different media (agenda setting), how it is described (framing), and on which discursive and ideological patterns the knowledge of diversity is shaped and constructed (gatekeeping) (see Lüsebrink, Podruchny/Thistle, Cappiali, and Härting in this volume). Different forms of stories and modes of storytelling shape social configurations and give rise to localities of transnationalism, understood as unbounded spaces in which narratives establish forms of solidarity and identity that enable as well as represent social, cultural, economic, and political relationships (Schwartzwald 2010). The focus on narratives and practices of (media) representation and memory (politics) of diversity (Vatter 2008; Despoix/Bernier 2007) allows the exploration of processes of problematization, articulation, and sedimentation of knowledges about difference and diversity with a special emphasis on inter-temporality.

1. When, how, and through whom are multi-cultured places and diversity problematized?
2. In which temporal and spatial terms are multi-cultured places and diversity articulated?
3. How do forms, strategies and codes of representation, and reflexivity become sedimented in ways that perpetuate practices of diversity or promote transculturation?

As the contributions to this volume will show, these modes of social action are closely intertwined, almost inseparable empirically. But the analytical distinction between these three modes unveils the conflictual, the quotidian, and the communicative character of mediation (of difference) as a complex social interaction producing distinct, yet often overlapping localities of diversity as well as transcultural spaces. Through the analytical lens of these three dominant modes of social interaction, the multi-disciplinary contributions to this volume address four broader empirical research fields: (1) the entangled and contested (hi)stories of diversity; (2) migration and the creation of transcultural spaces; (3) practices and politics of belonging; and (4) the dynamics of confrontation and cohabitation in spaces of difference. The research presented in this volume combines approaches from history, political science, sociology, migration studies and literature.

Entangled and Hidden Histories

The first section "Diversity – Entangled Histories of a Contested Concept" treats the issue of implicit knowledge, untold stories and the semantic and discursive power of "diversity" in three chapters. These contributions thereby address the entanglement of politics, practices and narratives of diversity although with different emphases. *Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink* reconstructs and investigates the emerging usage of the term and concept "diversité" in its ethno-cultural meaning in the context of the public and literary debates and controversies about "Regulation 17" agitating the Canadian public in the years before World War I. "Regulation 17" issued by the Ontario Ministry of Education in July 1912 created a critical moment in the sense of politics of diversity. It restricted the use of French as a language of instruction to the first two years of schooling. This infringement on Canada's then still officious bilingualism provoked vehement reactions not only among French Canadians, but also from Anglo-Canadians who participated in the emerging debate framing their position in terms of English liberalism and tolerance. "Regulation 17" had a direct impact on Canada's position and role in World War I, as it became a central reason why French Canadians distanced themselves from the war effort and refused to enlist. The following conscription crisis in Canada can and should also be read as part of Canada's politics of diversity.

Based on a historical-conceptual analysis of core texts produced in the context of the debate about "Regulation 17," Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink argues that the concept of diversity, which became prominent in the 1990s in the wake of Canada's multiculturalism policy and philosophy (see McFalls in this volume), was born as early as the beginning of the 20th century in the context of the debate about Canada's bilingualism. Diversity emerged here as a concept to legitimize and protect the dual linguistic heritage of Canada. Anglophone protagonists of Canada's bilingualism argued in favor of French with reference to the traditions of linguistic tolerance and diversity within the British Empire. Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink is able to show that the subtext and thus one of the hidden histories of the early 20th century Canadian public and literary discourse on diversity was the tradition of English liberalism. As one of the Anglo-Canadian participants of the debate underlined: "An Empire in which the Welsh, the French of Jersey, the natives of Malta, and the Sikhs of the plains of the Punjab are equally at home and equally respected in their language rights, is surely great enough to accord the fullest toleration in this respect toward the pioneer settlers of the Empire's premier colony" (Morley 1919: 83).

The discourse and ideological frames of today's "culture of diversity" is the topic *of Laurence McFall's* late 20th century genealogy of the concept of diversity. De- und reconstructing the

ideational frames addressed by the politics and philosophy of multiculturalism, interculturalism and diversity, Laurence McFalls uncovers how the current coupling of diversity and vulnerability informs and steers post-liberal modes of biopolitical government/governmentality by blurring scientific and social scientific discourses and creating a multi-layered narrative of cultural diversity and vulnerability that reduces "diversity" to an empty signifier.

Carolyn Podruchny and Jesse Thistle analyze the historiography of Canada's colonization through the lens of one Metis family, in order to explore "the Metis' colonial trauma and resistances throughout generations and the process of reclaiming their place in Canadian history" (Podruchny/Thistle in this volume). Combining the research perspectives of narratives and practices of diversity, the article pursues two objectives, an analytical and a political one. By de- and reconstructing the exclusionary impulses of the collective memory produced through mainstream Canadian historiography, the article contributes to the reclaiming of Metis history by connecting history and geography, stories and places, historical actors and their spatialized practices of diversity. Podruchny and Thistle argue that reclaiming and occupying space through travelling and storytelling was the core practice with which Metis people maintained kinship ties and created what Keith Basso has called "storied places" (Basso 1996). These "storied places" contain multiple layers of historical memories that are kept secret because still today the trauma of "the rebellion" keeps Metis people in traumatic silence. Podruchny and Thistle argue that these "hidden histories" circumscribing a critical moment in Metis history can only be unearthed by Metis people themselves.

Border Crossings and Transcultural Spaces

The second section is entitled "Border Crossings and Transcultural Spaces." Spaces of difference are created by day-to day social interactions. The analysis of quotidian practices of distinction and the appropriation of social spaces through a broad spectrum of different interactive practices help us to understand how spaces of difference are created. In her analysis of first-generation Algerian immigrant women in Paris *Rebecca Ferrari* uses Edward Casey's concepts of "space" and "place" (Casey 1993) in order to analyze the interrelation between emotions and places and the mutual relationship between human beings and places. Her analysis is based on personal narratives of her informants, narratives that are connected to specific places. Whereas Carolyn Podruchny and Jesse Thistle are focusing on hidden histories by looking at what Edward Casey would call "place memory" (Casey 1987: 187), Rebecca Ferrari is more interested in how highly emotional spaces are constructed through a combination of practices, material artefacts, life stories and memories. As she argues the "space tells me who

she [the informant] is and therefore they [the space and the inhabitant] construct each other mutually" (Ferrari in this volume). Hence, the spaces of difference to which Rebecca Ferrari gained access during her field research in Paris are places with many different characters and functions. All of these places are thresholds between different spheres: gender, generation, public/private, etc. As thresholds they allow Algerian women in Paris to move back and forth between different life-worlds. They offer possibilities of "passages" (Benjamin/Tiedemann 1983) without necessarily moving in a physical sense.

Physical displacement or relocations of the center of life is the topic of *Xymena Wieczorek*'s contribution to this volume. Like Podruchny/Thistle, Ferrari, Poitras, Makaremi and Tietze, Wieczorek uses a biographical approach, which she combines with the established research perspectives of sociological mobility and migration studies. Based on biographical interviews Xymena Wieczorek investigates border crossings and transcultural spaces created and experienced by Polish migrants in Canada and Germany. By taking into account the interplay between the temporal (generational), the spatial and the social level of mobility experiences, her exemplary analysis of one life story demonstrates how in this particular case the relocation of the center of life as a reiterating social practice creates fluid and volatile but nevertheless geographically localized spaces. She describes this particular kind of mobility as the "cosmopolitan pattern of mobility." The localized spaces of difference created by "cosmopolitan mobility" add a new element to the understanding of transcultural spaces described above. "Cosmopolitan mobility" pinpoints a spatio-temporal *jeux d'échelle* typifying the negotiation of diversity in contexts of high mobility. The spaces of difference experienced by Wieczorek's interviewees are characterized by structural asynchronicities and experiences of "Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen" (Koselleck 1979a, b). This simultaneity and co-existence of tradition and modernity corresponds, according to Rudolf Stichweh, to the simultaneity of diversity as a core characteristic of the modern world (Stichweh 2000: 216). Wieczorek's biographical approach and analysis demonstrates how this simultaneity of diversity on a global level is part of individual localized migrant biographies and their mobility practices.

Teresa Cappiali analyzes practices of diversity by deconstructing mainstream scientific narratives of migration scholars trying to explain problems and processes of immigrant integration and participation in the host society. Cappiali identifies three approaches – or scientific master narratives – that characterize the current debate over integration and participation: the "assistance approach," the "intercultural approach," and the "political rights protection approach." Especially the assistance approach is framed by the ideologies that

McFalls has identified in his genealogy of diversity. This scientific narrative constructs immigrants as vulnerable members of a society and thus contributes to the sedimentation of a specific attitude and understanding of how to conceptualize and cope with difference on the level of daily practices in politically institutionalized settings. Teresa Cappiali introduces a new multiple-actor approach to integration that takes the "local realm" as a starting point to analyze the dynamics of political participation and to study the interaction of actors who mobilize around the *enjeu* of immigration. This new scientific narrative that Cappiali introduces starts out from the research perspectives offered by our conception of practices of diversity and develops a different way of thinking about the immigrants' role in structuring the opportunities for participation through their interaction around the issue of immigration.

Becoming and Belonging

Considering the de-nationalizing dynamics of globalization, many historians, political scientist and sociologists meanwhile argue that the nation-state in its territorialized institutional set-up is a historically contingent construct that has lost its political, social, cultural and economic meaning (Risse/Lehmkuhl 2007). Nevertheless concepts of nation and nationhood continue to shape the politics, practices and narratives of "becoming and belonging". The two chapters of the third part of "Spaces of Difference" treat the phenomena of "nation / nationhood / nationalism" from two distinct perspectives. These two perspectives comprise two extremes of a broad spectrum of practices of diversity in which nationhood is mobilized. Sophie Schram addresses the negotiation of becoming and belonging in the context of the politics of international trade negotiations (CETA) and thus addresses the international level; Dave Poitras explores the embodied or institutionalized practices of nationhood structuring the every-day life of people living in bi-ethnic or bi-lingual cities, in his case Brussels and Montreal. He thus analyzes the micro-level of individual patterns of action and behavior.

By analyzing the mobilization of nationhood and sovereignty on the level of international trade politics *Sophie Schram* reveals how "borders" and "boundaries" are constructed and for what purposes. In her analysis of parliamentary debates – political narratives – in Quebec over the issue of trade regulations in the context of CETA, she identifies various frames through which difference between Quebec and the Rest of Canada is deliberately established. She shows how political elites engaged in international trade negotiations construct "national" borders and boundaries and thus Quebec as a political "space of difference" within the Canadian federal system by appropriating France and la Francophonie in order to advance the idea of Quebec's national autonomy and cultural specificity. The case of "La loi du camembert" is an intriguing

example of how politicians instrumentalize the international arena in order to establish and strengthen political demarcation and differentiation in a federally organized political entity.

In contrast, by observing people in their work environment in Brussels and Montreal *Dave Poitras* identifies practices that affirm the national/linguistic/ethnic duality of the places where his informants live and work. The bi-lingual and bi-ethnic character of the two cities has become internalized by the inhabitants of these places to an extent that 'nationhood' has developed into a social institution (Berger/Luckmann 1966) structuring the life-worlds and everyday practices of diversity in Brussels and Montreal.

Dynamics of Confrontation and Cohabitation

In contrast to the banality of practices of nationhood identified by Dave Poitras, the last three chapters of this volume address conflictual aspects of "becoming and belonging." Thus, although this last part also deals with questions of integration and acceptance, the contributions address more the tensions and ambiguities resulting from the power-laden dynamics of confrontation and cohabitation in spaces of difference situated in Western societies.

Chowra Makaremi's article explores refugee policies in France by focusing on the contradictory legal and bureaucratic practices regulating asylum procedures. Using an ethnographic approach, she analyzes the organization and constraints to mobility and the inherent exclusionary violence of France's refugee policy. She discusses "how the administration of unwanted mobility is reframing state borders in their forms and texture, and how these new borders are creating categories of non-residents, and situations of violence within the rule of law" (Makaremi in this volume).

Drawing on semi-structured interviews, *Nicola Tietze* explores constructions and imaginaries of becoming and belonging in Muslim, Kabyle, and Palestinian communities in Germany and France. She shows how her interviewees mobilize minority differences in distinct ways, by referring, for example, to rules for an Islamic way of life, to historical experiences during the colonial period, or to concepts of Palestinian nationalism. Dynamics of confrontation emerge through the shifting of certain concepts and imaginaries from one context to another. While traveling, these concepts alter their meaning, thereby producing conceptual misunderstandings or misfits. These failed "translations" often lie at the roots of perceptions of discrimination and stigmatization. Thus, the narratives of belonging told in the "language" of the cultural and ethnic origins of the interviewees reveal stories of failed conceptual translations that often become politicized as experiences of discrimination and exclusion.

In her critical discussion of dominant discourses of nationhood and national belonging, *Heike Härting* reads the aesthetics of contemporary indigenous performance art as an indigenous cosmopolitan imaginary. She analyzes indigenous art from the vantage point of "the politics of diversity" with a special focus on the political effects and the transformative power of indigenous aesthetics. Heike Härting argues that contemporary indigenous video installations, performances and music restructure the spatial iconography of Canadian settler and indigenous history, redistribute public spaces and expose the politics of colonial representation. In doing so, indigenous art offers insights into the complex dynamics of confrontation and cohabitation.

I will close my introductory remarks by coming back to the current refugee problem in Europe. The contributions to this volume are not policy papers. They do not offer political solutions. Instead they underline the complexity of the issues at stake and the inherent ambiguities and tensions. Since all but one of the contributions deal with contemporary situations, I feel obliged to add a historical perspective, though I am not arguing that we should learn from history. Historians have long learned not to do that. Instead I would like to share a part of European history that is under-researched and less known to many of us in order to remind us of European traditions and historical realities.

We are all aware of the European wars of religion during the late medieval and early modern period. Although sometimes unconnected, all of these wars were strongly influenced by the religious change of the period – the Protestant Reformation in Western and Northern Europe – and the conflicts and rivalries that it produced. Less known is the fact that during the same time, from the 13th to the late 18th century, there existed a state in Eastern Europe – Lithuania – where Christians, Jews and Muslims lived peacefully side by side.[4] The Grand Duchy of Lithuania included large portions of the former Kievan Rus' and other Slavic lands, covering the territory of present-day Belarus, Latvia, and Lithuania, as well as parts of Estonia, Poland, Russia, and Ukraine. At its greatest extent in the 15th century, it was the largest state in Europe, reaching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. It was a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state with great diversity in languages, religion, and cultural heritage. It became home to many refugees from Western Europe who were persecuted as heretics during the wars of religion. This

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[4] I have to thank Stefan Schreiner from the University of Tübingen for sharing his knowledge about Muslims in Eastern Europe during the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period in a lecture he gave at the Institute of Advanced Study, University of Konstanz. His historical knowledge and political insights in East European history and Near and Middle Eastern politics have inspired me to rethink some of the premises of my own work on the transatlantic discourse on equality, plurality, difference and diversity since the late 18th century. For an introduction into the remarkable history of Lithuania see (Niendorf 2006, 2010); (Potashenko 2002); (Rowell 1994).

extraordinarily large space of difference came to an end after the invasion of Russia in 1792 and the subsequent partition of the vast territory. I am telling this story because I think it is necessary to learn more about how spaces of difference like the Grand Duchy of Lithuania organized plurality. What were the politics, practices and narratives of diversity structuring Lithuania as a "transcultural space"? What are the differences between a vast multi-ethnic and multi-religious territory such as Lithuania and the multi-ethnic Empires of the modern era, for example the Austrian-Hungarian Empire? These and many other questions related to the fascinating history of Lithuania in the late mediaeval and early modern period open up research topics that would complement the empirical focus of the IRTG's Diversity research program and would thus lend themselves for diachronic comparison of conflicts and cohabitation in spaces of difference in Europe and North America.

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