

Abstract

Social and ethnic borders have proven themselves to be surprisingly long-lived. In nearly all European countries and beyond, border demarcation, exclusion of foreigners and minority conflicts are some of the most persistent challenges for nations and societies.

European nations are becoming more integrated, Russia has a long tradition as a multi-ethnic nation, and the U.S. is considered the prime example of a land of immigration. Nevertheless, migration, ethnic differences and social integration remain a political issue with great potential for social mobilization. Ethnicity clearly outlives any processes of convergence. How can the story of this phenomenon's "success" be explained? Which linguistic factors play a role in the formation of these borders (especially those drawn along ethnic lines)? What roles do language and language varieties play in the discourse surrounding analyses of social relationships that are deemed legitimate? Which linguistic constructs contribute to the negotiation, establishment and maintenance of ethnic groups and identities? Under which conditions can processes of linguistic convergence, hybrids, or transcultural identities be observed?

The linguistic constructs involved in ethnic borders are the primary focus of this volume, which draws on presentations given by scholars from Europe, South Africa, North and South America during the international conference *Linguistic Construction of Social Borders* (2013 in Frankfurt/Oder and Słubice).

This complex area of study will investigate the following themes:

- Group boundaries and identity
- Ethnic boundaries and minorities
- Boundaries and language islands
- Language borders and discourse

Keywords:

group boundaries, ethnic boundaries, identity, minorities, language islands, language borders, discourse

Schlagworte:

Gruppengrenzen, ethnische Grenzen, Identität, Minderheiten, Sprachinseln, Sprachgrenzen, Diskurs

