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Crossing the Line: Geographies of Antinuclear Activism in the Dutch-German Euregion, 1972-1991

Crossing the Line: Geographies of Antinuclear Activism in the Dutch-German Euregion, 1972-1991, focuses on Dutch opposition to the construction of a fast breeder nuclear reactor near the German town of Kalkar between 1972 and 1991. I apply the insights of social movement theory and political geography to the history of antinuclear protest in order to explore both the spatial requirements of political mobilization and the competing representations of political space made by the various parties interested in nuclear energy production within the Dutch-German Euregion. In this manner, I demonstrate the ways in which antinuclear activism fundamentally challenged established modalities of citizenship. Insisting that the effects of nuclear radiation did not respect state borders, Dutch activists asserted themselves in a German political discourse to which they had no right to participate. Their challenge to energy policy and the boundaries of citizenship provides an opportunity for my interdisciplinary inquiry into the history and cultural geographies of political power exercised in a regional and transnational context.

At issue is not simply the political success or failure of Dutch antinuclear activism in the German context, but also how, based upon their fear of exposure to nuclear radiation, Dutch opponents of the reactor at Kalkar made political claims in Germany that challenged both political and cultural constructions of citizenship and community. By investigating the range of competing assertions made about political space by vested interests in the Kalkar reactor, I explore the spatial facet of political conflict - the ways in which territorial borders and community membership are evoked in public discourse to make claims about political legitimacy. Preliminary research indicates that state actors, business interests, scientific experts and grassroots activists mapped the spaces of nuclear energy production and political life in competing ways. Evaluating their respective claims, I will explain how, beyond the

nuclear threat, cross-border activism challenged state-centric politics in the Euregion during the 1970s and 1980s.