Preface

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This volume is based on a series of workshops and conference panels organized as part of the EastBordNet, a scholarly network initiated at a meeting in Manchester in May 2006 connecting researchers working in the north-east regions of Europe (Baltics and surrounding regions) with researchers working in the south-east regions (Balkans and environs). The objective of the network was to form a scholarly community that would examine borders and their meaningfulness across space and time.

COST IS0803, the research network that became the EastBordNet project, was officially launched with a management committee meeting in Brussels in February 2009. Researchers from Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Slovenia, Sweden, and the UK signed up to the project. The first Work Groups were held in Nicosia and Rome in April 2009, and the idea for this volume sprouted from that very first workshop in Nicosia held on 14–15 April 2009. Under the terms of EastBordNet, Work Group 1, which began in Nicosia, became a forum over the life of the network, in which researchers exchanged ideas about the theory and ontology of borders. The Work Group started with the question ‘what are borders?’ It focused on the concept of borders and drew on empirical and conceptual material to map out the state of research on border ontology. The Work Group ultimately sought to outline what the concept of ‘remaking borders’ might mean from a wide range of perspectives, and how that might be used to address questions that other meetings in EastBordNet asked: the relation of borders to technology, difference, and translation, and the role of money, gender, and concepts of time and the ‘east’ to the constitution of borders. All of these are topics covered in the current series.

Entitled ‘Productive Borders: Perspectives on the Critique of Duality’, the Nicosia meeting was conceptualized and organized by Olga Demetriou. It sought to examine borders first and foremost as markers of division that signify a duality. This duality, the meeting recognized, was critiqued by many philosophical strands,

including post-colonialism, phenomenology, and post-structuralism. The work of the delegates focused on this theorization and on the multiplicities or singularity that a dual understanding of the world obscures. Yet at the end of the meeting the general conclusion was that both of these perspectives were limited by their own excess: endless multiplicity as well as the singularity of identity and difference seem to lead to a vanishing point that escapes description. The Nicosia Work Group meeting therefore addressed different ways in which singularity and multiplicity have been related to each other across theoretical strands, and enquired into how these might be brought to bear in understanding how borders produce difference and/or its disappearance.

Several of the current contributions were initially conceived at this 2009 Nicosia Work Group 1 meeting. The chapter written by Sarah Green addressed the issue that would soon become one of the main cornerstones of the EastBordNet theoretical approach. The paper 'Lines, Traces and Tidemarks: Reflections on Forms of Borderli-ness' examined the notion of difference dominating border literature, and introduced the concepts of traces and tidemarks. If borders mark differences, Green insisted, they do not all do so in the same way. And while this has been studied from a range of angles, border literature has rarely focused on the forms that borders take, in both material and conceptual terms. Most often borders are thought of as lines, or entities related to lines: walls, barriers, fences, perimeters, edges. Green's paper maintained that lines always evoke a sense of two sides, and of course, that has been critiqued by scholars who prefer to think in terms of rhizomes, webs, fractals, or networks. Borders are often experienced as a series of points rather than lines as such: points at which people, things, animals cross; or fail to cross. Lines only really appear on images of borders – maps, GIS images, aerial photographs. Traces, in contrast, evoke a sense of time in a way that lines do not: traces are not always visible, or if they are, then they are only a small fragment of the whole entity. For Green, traces are porous, leave much room for doubt and speculation, and change over time, perhaps disappearing altogether. Using the ideas of lines, traces, and tidemarks, Green's contribution began an important conversation on 'border-ness'; and as this volume reveals, the concept of tidemarks introduced by Green at that first Work Group meeting in Nicosia in 2009 has enabled many of the contributors to apply it to their own research (Demetriou, Dimova, and Jansen represent this in the current volume).

Another paper presented during the first Nicosia meeting was Tuija Pulkkinen's 'Ontologies of Productive Borders', where she also examined borders as productive of difference and identity. Responding directly to the workshop's call for a reconsideration of theoretical frames on duality and against it, Pulkkinen offered two alternative ontologies for thinking the productiveness of borders. On the one hand, she focused on the tradition of thought based on certain Hegelian reflections in Jacques Derrida's work, and on the other, on the Spinozian tradition taken up in the work of Gilles Deleuze. The 2009 paper and the chapter in this volume take as

their point of reference two very different concrete historical cases of the activity of drawing borders, one being a drawing of a political border on the map of Europe in 1809 between Sweden and Russia, and the other being an epistemic border drawn in the discourses on sexualities in the late nineteenth century, both with multiple subsequent effects in terms of identities and differences. Inspired by previous work on these two cases and seeing them as examples of the productivity of borders, the paper related them to the two intellectual approaches taken by Derrida and Deleuze. Pulkkinen showed how these processes could be interpreted under these terms and what the consequences for such thinking would be in terms of activity or passivity and positivity or negativity, among other aspects. By considering Deleuze's classic work *Difference and Repetition*, together with Derrida's idea of *différance*, thinking about them and against one another, the paper became part of ongoing work on the philosophical topic of contemporary ontological approaches and their effects. These are questions which Pulkkinen uses to re-examine issues addressed in previous work on the political history of Finland and on theorizing sexual identity.

The first meeting in Nicosia was also the place where Rozita Dimova initially formulated her ideas about this volume's contribution. The paper presented there was entitled 'Neoliberalism, Nationalism and Border Arrangements in the Southern Balkans', and there Dimova explained the contemporary contradiction between political dispute and economic exchange between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia. In doing so, she traced how neoliberal political-economic regimes are reconfiguring relationships between two countries entangled in a name dispute. Importance was placed on the reconfiguration of contemporary states and the growing range of privatizing domains and private authorities involved in larger transnational economic investments – an aspect that is overshadowed by the political dispute over the name.

One year later, in April 2010, Dimova hosted the second meeting of Work Group 1 in Berlin in a workshop entitled 'Borders, Materiality, Signification'. This workshop directly posed the question of borders' visibility. What defines their materiality and how do borders cope with multiple significations attached to them during and after radical regime change? This meeting continued to assess conceptual questions related to borders, but now by focusing on issues of materiality and multiple significations. Just as they had used the space of the city of Nicosia at the meeting a year earlier, the organizers used the specificity of the meeting's location – the city of Berlin – to launch the discussion by addressing the cold war legacy and the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall, as well as the multiple sediments left by intersecting borders across different temporal and spatial axes in and beyond this city (e.g. East–West).

Two papers presented at this workshop are in the current volume: Stef Jansen's and Eleni Myrivili's. Jansen's presentation focused on the materiality of a border without the visible shape of a border (such as a barrier, a fence, a checkpoint, a customs office, uniformed border officers, etc.) that nevertheless structures the

lives of those living around it in deeply material ways. The so-called Boundary Line between the two entities of Bosnia-Herzegovina is a recently established border that only briefly drew its efficacy from visible, 'built' dimensions – first as a front-line through the anti-building of destruction and abandonment, and then as an armistice line through built checkpoints policed by soldiers under a UN mandate. Now 'unbuilt', it nevertheless continues as the material axis of practical geography and of a struggle for sovereignty. Taking into account these shifts in border craft, Jansen explored how the (in)visible and (im)material modalities of this border are differentially embedded in everyday practices of (non-)crossing and in competing projects of state-formation. Stef Jansen re-addressed this theme in a later panel, at the network's conference in Catania, using the prism of a 'tidemark'. As his chapter now does, that paper traced the formation of the Inter-Entity Boundary Line in Dobrinja, in the suburban outskirts of the capital Sarajevo. Based on ethnographic research, his paper proposed an integrated three-dimensional interpretation of the sedimentation of the line-ness of this border, which is constitutive of the largely nationally homogenized entities Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and which, in the Dayton Agreement, consolidated the crystallization of difference onto territory. His chapter in this volume argues, as that presentation did, that this tidemark, in its brutal arbitrariness, came into being and is consolidated through social practices on the intersection of geopolitical processes and the affective patterns through which people engage with them. It thus proposes to push an understanding of this border as a 'tidemark' as far as possible, while keeping human practice resolutely at the centre of the argument through a materialist focus on the social-practices-over-time that constitute it from Dobrinja to Dayton and back again.

In her Berlin presentation, Eleni Myrivili asked how the border manifests itself when it is liquid. Carrying on the concern to theorize 'what borders are', Myrivili related her ethnographic findings to the work of Foucault and Bataille. For these two thinkers, the limit/border assumes its fullness of being, its 'density', its 'materiality', at the moment of its negation, the moment of its transgression. At the Prespa border region, three limits, those of Albania, Greece, and Macedonia, cut and partition the waters of a large mountain lake with their formless power. They are invisible and ghostly, only to become spectacularly tangible in violence that ensues following their transgression. In the 1980s, electric fences came all the way down to the lake. In the 1990s, the national guards shot warning shots before aiming directly at the border violators. In November 2009, the prime ministers of the three countries met in the Prespa region and talked about the transnational environmental park of Prespa and the green local economy, and set the year 2014 (a hundred years after the beginning of the First World War) as the target year for a new beginning, a new era that would see the Western Balkans as part of the EU. In the paper and this volume's contribution, Myrivili posed the question of what kind of subjects are formed around these borders, around these strange presences of power and violence. How

did the people of these borders experience them then, and what kind of experiences form their subject positions now?

Several new papers were solicited and modifications of the earlier papers were made at the first and second EastBordNet conferences in Catania (January 2011) and Berlin (January 2013). These conferences consolidated the work of the Work Groups across the EastBordNet network. In this context, the first EastBordNet conference that took place in Catania in 2011, featured a panel co-organized by Olga Demetriou and Rozita Dimova entitled 'The Visible through the Sensible: (Im)materialities of Borders' that brought together the conversations initiated during the Nicosia and Berlin meetings in 2009 and 2010 by exploring different ways of talking about visibility (ocularity) of borders beyond the material/immaterial or tangible/intangible dualisms. We asked if borders have to be material in order to become visible. What constitutes a border's materiality, or when do (could) borders become immaterial? How can we speak convincingly about the relation between material and conceptual borders in ways that go beyond 'bridging the gap' between the two? The panel addressed the following themes through the notions of (in)tangibility, (non)materiality, and (in)visibility by contrasting them to comparative approaches to the theorization of borders and by drawing on the literary and philosophical techniques used to conceptualize borders to address issues such as interaction between time, space, and politics as elements constituting the border's appearance and disappearance.

One of the papers given at the Catania panel was Chiara De Cesari's 'Memory Voids and the Making of Europe's Borders', which presented ideas on which her chapter in the current volume draws. Focusing on the relationship between collective memory and the making of geopolitical boundaries, De Cesari placed the main focus on the ongoing institutional project of creating a heritage for Europe, that is, the recent flurry of initiatives by policy-makers and intellectuals to promote a common European memory so as to 'thicken' European Union (EU) citizens' weak European identity. In particular, she discussed the opening exhibition of the Museum of Europe in Brussels by pointing at the memory voids at the heart of such projects, particularly the Arab Islamic heritage of Europe and Europe's entangled, transnational, trans-European history. De Cesari's paper pointed out the oblivious making of boundaries out of transitory, porous, and unstable geographies. For this volume, the paper was further developed and focused explicitly on the oblivion written into the Italy–Libya friendship treaty.

Olga Demetriou's paper at the Catania conference similarly set forth ideas out of which her current contribution developed. The paper, entitled 'The Militarisation of Opulence on the Cypriot Border', concentrated on the materiality of a specific site on the Cypriot UN Buffer Zone, Ledra Palace Hotel, and used it to address the conceptual ways in which the 'Cyprus conflict' is produced. Demetriou proposed a multi-faceted analytic approach that drew on political economy, heritage literature, and gender studies to investigate what hegemonic conceptualizations of 'the

conflict' have obfuscated. Her chapter in this volume continues this investigation, treating borders as devices for knowing and questioning the world. The material-conceptual structures through which borders are produced, Demetriou argues here, have diachronic relevance but may nevertheless appear at specific instances and specific locations. Taking account of the *longue durée* of borders requires that we consider ways of knowing the border alongside its material manifestations.

These previous meetings and presentations all came together at the final EastBordNet conference in Berlin in January 2013, when the conference marked the completion of the investigative work for the EastBordNet research network. This network enabled us to put together this volume, which now is the second volume in the Rethinking Borders series. The key to developing the new approach to borders was the refusal to take borders for granted: rather than assume their existence and go on from there to analyse their effects, we began from the position of questioning what 'border' and 'borderliness' actually mean, and looked into how that was diversely expressed across time and space.

That first 2009 Nicosia workshop seems a long time ago now. But as the papers from the various meetings were reworked, debated, and employed in multiple conversations within the Work Group and across the network, our understanding of the ontology and epistemology of borders opened new directions of enquiry and new ways of thinking about borders. This volume represents the epitome of this rethinking, which has spawned, almost a decade later, new theoretical directions in considering the political materialities of borders.

Reconsideration is of course an endless process. We were keenly reminded of this at the final stages of preparing the volume, as the refugee reception crisis of 2015 unfolded on the Greco-Turkish border, and continued to reverberate, through the arduous foot journeys of refugees across the Balkans: regions that a number of contributors to this volume know well. Our individual empirical research, as well as our conceptual toolbox, seemed in need of further revision. Ethical questions were keenly felt as we revised chapters for the final manuscript. Should political standpoints be addressed in clearer terms, in the face of disappointing responses from political elites? Was academic 'rethinking' an indulgent task, ultimately? If ontologies and epistemologies of borders had sat at the heart of the volume's concerns, another, more urgent concept now appeared in need of ontological and epistemological understanding: 'crisis'. The terms in which border crossings were now spoken of seemed to describe differing regimes of power and indeed, political materialities. Was this a 'refugee crisis', a 'migration crisis', a 'border crisis', or indeed a crisis of 'reception'? And what indeed, does the term 'crisis' do politically in each of these contexts? Whatever we chose to call it, the 'crisis' inevitably impinged on our individual projects, and revealed unprecedented entanglements of care, surveillance, control, humanitarian aid, militarization of borders, and myriads of affects. Although we were cognizant of these questions as we finalized the chapters, it has been impossible to reflect new knowledge, data, and the theorization that may have

ensued from their collection here. We can only hope that as we engage in conversations across geographical and disciplinary boundaries on the global effects of this 'crisis', our thinking about what borders are or are not, and how we come to know and speak of them, may be of use to understanding the expected and unexpected events and practices that unfold through them and that unmake and remake them on multiple levels.