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Intrecci di confine

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EDITOR'S NOTE

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1. The trouble with overlapping borders

- 1 Whatever else contemporary political borders are supposed to do, they should clearly separate one territory from one another. Of course, what this separation actually means for people has been debated heavily over the last decades, and I myself have contributed quite a bit to that debate². Most of the discussion has involved questions of identity in one way or another: the degree to which political borders either reflect, produce and/or affect, questions of who people are and how they experience the world. The debates have demonstrated that borders are historically contingent, and shot through with the exercise of both material power and performative metaphors. My interest in borders is less directed at questions of identity and more directed at what it is that gives a border a feel or sense of “border-ness” and how that changes over time

(Green 2012). From that perspective, however illusory, contingent, fluid or complex borders are taken to be, they are still supposed to clearly separate one place, thing or idea from another place, thing or idea: that is the point of marking something as a border. As Gregory Bateson mentioned decades ago, a border marks «a difference that makes a difference» (Bateson 1972: 453); I have argued elsewhere that this is another way of saying that borders classify things, or at least they are supposed to do so (Green 2019).

- 2 In practice, of course, the degree to which that effort at classification is successful varies considerably. The world is full of vague, contested, incomplete and incoherent borders. Yet that does not detract from the fact that what borders are *supposed* to do, what is intended by those who build them, is to create clarity – at the very least legally and politically, if not also socially and symbolically. Any contested border axiomatically becomes unfinished business. The Green Line in Cyprus is a case in point: it has been there since the early 1970s; yet, so long as the people on the two sides fail to agree about their territorial dispute, it will remain unfinished business (Demetriou 2007; Papadakis *et al.* 2006).
- 3 Quite a lot has been written about these contested borders. Rather less has been written about overlapping borders, which is my focus here. The European Union (EU) is full of such overlapping borders, simply because of its structure as a political entity: it is a political and economic union of sovereign states, in which a variety of agreements have been made that have created diverse coalitions between different groups of these sovereign states (Berend 2009; Rumford 2002). These agreements effectively create borders between those countries that are within the coalition and those that are not.
- 4 A couple of examples: the countries that use the euro as their currency includes 17 of the 27 EU member states, creating a border between the Eurozone countries and those outside of it³; the countries that are included in the Schengen Area (within which there are no passport controls) includes 22 of the 27 EU member states, but it also includes five states that are not members of the EU (Norway, Iceland, Switzerland, Monaco and Liechtenstein), creating a crosscutting boundary between some EU states and others, while including non-EU member states. There are many such examples, and an excellent diagram of the overlapping border regimes that involve the EU can be found on Wikimedia⁴. My point here is simply that in principle, contemporary borders are not supposed to overlap in that way.
- 5 This condition of crosscutting, entangled borders in the heart of Europe, the place where the Westphalian border concept was invented (Jacob, Dahl 2006; Pickles 2004; Rumford 2006; Sassen 2008), is somewhat surprisingly rarely mentioned. One reason might be that they are quite difficult to see, since contemporary maps usually only show sovereign state borders. The diverse range of agreements that create other borders that crosscut the state borders are not visible on normal political maps.
- 6 The reason that I am calling this situation a form of entanglement can be seen through the current Brexit process. When Britain, one of the EU members states, tried to work out how to leave the EU, it turned out to be a little like trying to unravel a finely and tightly woven carpet by untying every single knot in it in order to separate out the British threads, and then having to agree with the other EU member states about how each thread should be re-knotted differently, so as to disentangle the British threads in some way, but not to entirely cut all British ties to the EU. This continues to be highly

complex puzzle, even though Britain is neither in the Schengen Area nor within the Eurozone.

- 7 It is not my intention to highlight the historically unique form of border arrangements within the EU that has led to these kinds of complex border arrangements; rather, I am drawing on it as a relatively obvious example of a phenomenon that probably exists just about everywhere: state borders are regularly crosscut by other ways of creating alliances and separations between territories, and that generates overlapping claims to the same geographical spaces. At the same time, contemporary understandings of territory and its relations to notions of sovereignty, whose history Stuart Elden (2013) has so elegantly analysed, make it difficult, and certainly politically awkward, to formally recognise the co-existence of overlapping borders in the same space. Formally, the EU is made up of a group of sovereign states, all of which retain their sovereignty over their own territories. Any collective agreement between all or some of these EU member states (e.g. to implement the Schengen area; to use the euro as currency; to regulate imports from third countries) does not take away the sovereign territorial borders of each state; but it does add another spatial arrangement in which some regulation or law crosscuts those state borders. There were so many of these kinds of arrangements involving Britain's relations with the EU that it generated a sense of knottedness, a kind of entanglement (metaphorically speaking). Within the Brexit debates, the difficulty of describing this entanglement within the language of sovereignty has caused very considerable amounts of trouble.
- 8 It should be clear by now that by "border", I mean something that always has a literal spatial significance, in that the value and meaning of particular geographical locations are affected or even generated by it, and that it (border) is supposed to generate or mark clear separations between one entity and the next. At the same time, this not only refers to conventional geo-political borders (though I do mean those), but also the borders generated by other powerful forces – such as financial institutions, supra-national organizations, organized religion and infrastructural systems. Sometimes, these diverse entities are perfectly aligned into single borders; much more often, they crosscut one another or are entangled in a variety of ways⁵.
- 9 The Brexit example reveals that the co-existence of border arrangements that crosscut and overlap with sovereign political borders is a normal feature of contemporary border dynamics – it is part of the spatial, political, legal, financial and infrastructural environment in which people live these days. The aim of this paper is to make these additional and overlapping border regimes more explicit, and to explore what the possible effects of the co-existence might be for people's lives. This paper makes a small intervention in that direction, by looking at a combination of ethnographic, historical and even a short biographical piece focusing on the island of Lesbos, which considers how border entanglement, in the sense that I have defined it above, works in practice.

2. Co-existing and overlapping borders in the Aegean

- 10 Geographically and politically, Lesbos is a Greek island located in the north Aegean, quite close to the western coast of Turkey. It has seen multiple transformations in both geo-political and social borders over the decades and centuries. Each transformation has resulted in a shift in the island's political, social and economic location, and each

has created both greater connections with some places while generating disconnections from others. Each has also left traces of the previous arrangements.

- 11 One of the most marked of these transformations was the mass compulsory transfer of populations between Greece and Turkey in 1923, following the end of highly violent conflicts in the region and the final breakup of the Ottoman Empire. Before these events, both Orthodox Christians and Muslims co-existed on both sides of the Aegean (Hirschon 2003). After the exchange of populations, the Turkish side was emptied of Orthodox Christians and the Greek side was emptied of Muslims; but their neighbourhoods and old places of worship remained, and many of the buildings still exist. Many people on Lesbos suggested to me that they can easily tell the difference between someone whose family had been refugees and someone whose family had not been exchanged. Whether that is genuinely possible without knowledge of the family histories of the people concerned is difficult for me to say. But that is not as important as the fact that people still say that the difference is one that makes a difference. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, one that recreates the border that was established in 1923 in the simultaneously social, physical and political distance generated between neighbours.
- 12 Yet the separation has never been complete. There are those on Lesbos who still wonder about the lives of their relatives and ancestors who were born and grew up on the western Anatolian coast and left everything behind when they were sent to Lesbos. Some of them occasionally visit Ayvalik or Izmir, two of the main towns from which the exchanged populations had arrived. Several people told me that those visits left them feeling a little empty, as if the visit did not provide the traces they were looking for. The material connections that should have been there because the traces were still in people's minds had somehow become lost over the years – either lost in translation (what was in the mind no longer matched the ground), or the material and social ties had corroded and disappeared somehow, even though they persisted in people's imaginations. Probably both.
- 13 That moment in 1923 is still important to many people in Lesbos; the multiple ruptures caused both by the exchange of populations and the cutting of official ties between the island and the now Turkish mainland still reverberated. It was into that context of a strong border between Turkey and Greece intended to mark a complete break between the places and the people, sitting on top of the social memory of an intermingling of people and places, that the recent wave of migration and refugees arrived. I will begin this brief account of the kinds of entanglement this created, through a short discussion of the new arrivals on the shores of Lesbos.

3. Crosscutting borders: migration and money troubles

- 14 Undocumented people who were trying to flee trouble in more recent years have been arriving on the shores of Lesbos in noticeable numbers since the early 2000s, more or less since the US Government's violent response to 9/11 began in Afghanistan and then Iraq in 2003. People fled westwards, and some of them made it across the Aegean Sea from Turkey to the island of Lesbos. The location of Lesbos in geographical terms is obviously important, in the same way that the location of Lampedusa in relation to the North African coast has been important for those travelling from sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, it is worth noting that the geographical location of Lesbos is only

important because of the political status of the island: that Lesvos is a part of Greece is the result of that fateful conflict in the 1920s which could easily have turned out differently (Clogg 1992). In addition, the fact that Greece has been a part of the European Union since 1981 while Turkey remains on the outside⁶, another historical accident that might have turned out otherwise, means that there is a double border in the Aegean: one between two states (Greece and Turkey), and another between EU territory and non-EU territory. It is that second border, from non-EU territory to EU territory, that most of the people who were fleeing trouble were attempting to cross; few, if any, were intending to travel to Greece, as such.

- 15 In any case, as the violence continued in places such as Afghanistan and Iraq in the early 2000s, and the political and economic instability of the region intensified, the numbers fleeing and trying to cross the Aegean rose. After 2011, which was rapidly dubbed the year of the “Arab Spring” in the Western media, the numbers again went up sharply⁷. By that point, much of Europe, and Greece in particular, was also in the grip of that deep financial and fiscal crisis which had begun in 2008, and which had hit Greece forcefully from 2009 onwards (Dalakoglou, Agelopoulos 2018).
- 16 By the summer of 2015, these two situations came together to create what felt like a perfect storm on the island of Lesvos. First, in financial terms, the Greek government, under the new anti-austerity Syriza administration, was having tempestuous disagreements with the EU, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund about financial bailouts and the austerity measures that Greece had to implement in return for these bailouts. The talks had broken down to such a degree that Greece had closed its banks and was allowing customers to withdraw a maximum of 60 euro per day from cashpoint machines. Some people on the island of Lesvos laughed about that, saying that they wish they had as much as 60 euro a day to withdraw. Others queued for hours in the hopes the machines would not be empty by the time they got their turn (Green 2017).
- 17 And second, the summer of 2015 was the period of the highest number of undocumented people arriving from Turkey in the contemporary period. There were between 1000 and 3000 people arriving daily on the island at that point, though it was exceptionally difficult to identify exact numbers, as many researchers working on the issue in Greece have found (Rozakou 2017; Cabot 2014). Some people on Lesvos suggested to me that the reason for the high increase in numbers arriving that summer was because Alexis Tsipras, the head of the Syriza Party and the new Prime Minister of Greece, had promised to stop the practice of “push-backs” if he won the election. The push-backs involved the coastguard and/or a Frontex ship nudging any illegal vessel that they came across in the sea back into Turkish waters⁸. This is explicitly illegal if the vessel is experiencing some kind of emergency, but it is also a legal grey area for vessels that are simply present in territorial waters illegally. Officially, the coastguard and Frontex are supposed to contact the vessel and inform the captain that they are not legally in Greek or EU waters, and that they should leave; in practice, they would often “nudge” them back across the territorial line without contacting them, knowing that if they did contact them, the captain would inform the authorities that there were people aboard who wanted to claim asylum in Greece, and then the coastguard would be obliged to help. The Syriza government under Tsipras was known to be against these “nudgings” or push-backs. That resulted, many on Lesvos believed, in the large numbers arriving all of a sudden in the summer of 2015: those who had been pushed

back for months on end could now try again without the threat of a push-back, or so they believed.

- 18 Many residents of the island of Lesbos initially did as much as they could to help the new arrivals, even though everyone felt overwhelmed by it all, coming as it did in the midst of the financial crisis. That feeling of being overwhelmed was not only the sheer numbers that were arriving, day after day, relentlessly; it was also the disproportion involved: the gap between what the local people and organizations could do to respond to the needs of the people arriving on the island and what those people actually needed was so huge that it felt insurmountable. Repeatedly, I heard people expressing how shocked and exhausted they were, not to mention the shock and exhaustion of the new arrivals. There were also many people arriving who had been traumatised, both by their experiences in their home country and by the journey to reach Lesbos. It was an intensely difficult and fragile period, and it felt explosive.
- 19 In any case, until that summer of 2015, not much attention had been paid to Lesbos, other than several Frontex operations trying to control the EU's outer borders, and a few newspaper articles decrying the conditions of the makeshift camps where the arrivals were staying until they were bureaucratically processed and put on a ferry to Athens. There were few news reports of the actions of organizations and groups from the island either, except for a couple of human-interest stories of individual heroism.
- 20 Things changed quite dramatically after that summer of 2015, and beginning in late September of that year, when the full force of every international agency and operation began to be felt on the island. UNHCR and other NGOs arrived in enormous numbers, and basically took over the tasks taken on by the local authorities and the local residents. UNHCR in particular implemented a highly bureaucratic series of procedures (the same ones they use transnationally), and co-opted a number of local organizations into their operations, but required them to abide by their rules. And as the political cost of the continued arrival of asylum seekers across the Mediterranean began to be understood by the EU authorities, the EU negotiated an expensive and legally questionable deal with Turkey to take back many of the people who had made it across (Rozakou 2017). Here, the character of the EU border in the Aegean was being refashioned, even if that was legally questionable. At the same time, all kinds of famous people, including Susan Sarandon, Angelina Jolie, and the Pope, arrived on the island to express concern and try to do something⁹. The Pope actually took twelve refugees back with him to the Vatican¹⁰.
- 21 The islanders who had been initially doing what they could for the new arrivals, and had been doing it on their own without help, were for the most part ignored by the new NGO procedures. In 2016, someone arranged to nominate a fisherman and a woman pensioner from the village of Skala Sikamnia for the Nobel Peace Prize, symbolic of all the islanders who had assisted; the proposal was not taken up by the Nobel committee. In any case, it generated a lot of bad feeling about those who were mentioned in the citation and those who were not mentioned. The whole episode revealed the mass of tensions that had been brewing between people, groups, villages and organizations over this period.
- 22 By 2018, after three years of NGO presence and, in the view of many island residents, endless political posturing, people had grown weary, suspicious and angry about the whole situation. It was easy for people to fall back on the rhetoric of betrayal that Herzfeld identified many years ago in Greece: the strong sense that from 1453 onwards,

international political entities that ought to be allies and ought to help Greeks in their time of need, always come up short at best, and completely betray Greeks' trust at worst (Herzfeld 1986)¹¹.

4. Traces of entanglements

- 23 Some of the people who felt betrayed and abandoned on Lesbos lived in the village of Molivos. On Google maps, Molivos is called Mythimna, a name it was given during the late 1960s during a drive to change the names of places that sounded too Turkish; nobody actually called it that, not when I was visiting over the last five summers (2013-2018), nor during the 1960s, when my family lived there for a few years; but the official name does still appear occasionally on road signs. In any case, Molivos did not attract the kind of attention that Mytilene, the refugee camps, or Skala Sikamnia had attracted in the media. Even so, Molivos, which is a large village on the northwest coast of the island that faces Turkey received a large number of asylum seekers and other undocumented arrivals over the last few years, and it became an intense and tense issue of debate in the summer of 2015, as it did everywhere else on the island.
- 24 Molivos has a slightly different character from many of the other villages in the area. The most important element is that in the 1920s, most people who had been living in Molivos were sent to Turkey during the compulsory exchange of populations, as they were almost all Muslim. They were replaced by Orthodox Christians who were moved there from the Turkish side. This means that after 1923, almost all the people in the village were refugees from Asia Minor.
- 25 When I was very young, I had no idea about this past, but the entanglement nevertheless made itself felt. This is where I will provide a brief biographical element to this paper, to give a sense of what it was like in the 1960s in that town. The aim is to show the traces of overlapping and shifting borders and how they made themselves present in daily life, mixed in with what was going on politically at the time in Greece. Some important background information is that from 1967 to 1974, Greece was under military rule under Colonel Georgios Papadopoulos; that regime was supported by the US government, and the island of Lesbos was known to have a large number of communist sympathisers, who were treated quite harshly by the military junta (Clogg, Yannopoulos 1972). I have deliberately written the next section in a style that tries to capture something of how I remember living those years, so it is through the eyes of a child¹².

5. Traces in Molivos

Flows

- 26 If you stand facing the back of the village in Molivos, you can see Turkey across the way. When I was a child living there in the 1960s, I could look at Turkey from that point, but I could not go there. I didn't ask why; I just knew that it was not allowed. I often stared at that land across the sea which was made slightly hazy by the distance and the sea air, and I wondered what it might be like there. On a clear day, it felt almost as if I could reach out and touch it, or hear some sounds coming from over there. It looked, from where I stood, just like where I lived on Lesbos, with rocks, bare patches

and forested patches, and possibly some houses here and there, and a road or two. People told me that there were Turks there. They said it in a way that made me feel I should understand that this meant I should not want to go there. Still, I stared across at those bluish hills in the distance, wondering about them.

- 27 It seemed so strange not to be able to go there; after all, I swam every day in the sea here during the spring, summer and early autumn months, and we often took boats to local places, especially a little rock in the middle of the bay that we called Rabbit Island. My parents said they called it that because rabbits lived on it, but I never saw a rabbit, so maybe they were lying. We went to the island as a little excursion, with food and drink for a beach picnic, but also so that we could swim naked. That was not allowed either. A military regime controlled Greece from 1967 to 1974 under a man called Georgios Papadopoulos, and there were some strange things Papadopoulos did not like. People swimming naked in the sea was one of them. He said it was indecent. I realise as I say it now, in 2019, that this idea of indecency might sound normal, but it was a strange idea for my north European parents in the 1960s, which was the time of free love. So, we went to Rabbit Island to break the law and swim naked. It made me feel, when I was a child, like a pirate – or at least, what I imagined pirates might be: lawbreakers.
- 28 In any case, I knew that crossing the sea to those blue hills of Turkey might take a little bit longer than getting to Rabbit Island, but it would still be easy. On a calm day, and with a good boat that could cut smoothly through the water, it would probably only take an hour or so. And unlike the law about swimming naked, which my parents laughed about and ignored on Rabbit Island, the law about not being allowed to go to Turkey was obviously a lot more serious. Nobody even suggested breaking it. For me, there never was an unbroken flow across this small stretch of sea between Molivos and the Turkish coast. It was always broken up by an invisible but very real line that I knew could not be crossed.

Traces

- 29 The harbour was full of fishing boats in those days, big and small, and they went out on the sea in almost all weathers, every evening, and they would return in the early morning, hopefully with nets full of fish that would be taken immediately to the ice factory. The ice factory was the only place in Molivos that had a really good generator which worked all the time, grinding out ice to keep the fish fresh. And a man called Kostas would cut two huge blocks of ice in the morning and put them in the baskets carried by his mule. He would go up into the village and cut out smaller squares of the ice, just the right size for all of us to put in our ice boxes for the day.
- 30 I would usually get up earlier than everyone else in my family, except for my father, who got up at five and started to type on his Hermes typewriter. On many days, it was my job to go down to the town to buy something we needed for breakfast. Most often, I had to go to the yoghurt shop to get fresh yoghurt, which was sold in small, medium and large ceramic pots. The man in the shop would ask me every day what I wanted to buy. And I said, “yoghurt - yaourti”. The shop did not sell anything else. To this day, I still wonder why he asked me that question. I think it might have been a joke, and that I was supposed to laugh. But I never did, which I now regret. It should have been quite a funny joke for a five-year-old, even when told repeatedly.

- 31 My trip to the centre of the village to buy yoghurt took me past many traces of previous times in this place. I noticed them, but they were never discussed. My father was a classicist, and he talked about the past all the time, incessantly, in fact. He would make the archaeological sites in Greece come to life, telling stories of the lives of a panoply of mythical gods and half-gods and mortals and historical characters as well, often reciting the poetry of Homer into my pre-teenage ears, and I had no idea what I was hearing, really. But these were not the traces of the history that was scattered all around me in Molivos in full view, that nobody ever talked about. At the bottom of my house was an old water faucet with a marble surround and an Arabic inscription on it. It was beautiful. Nobody could tell me what the inscription said. On the top of the hill there is a huge castle, and it was one of my playgrounds as a child; nobody told me where it came from. And right in the middle of the village, where the three main cobble streets meet, was the mosque of the town. When I was a child, it was an indoor cinema and nobody said anything about the past use of this place; nobody ever implied that there was anything Islamic about this town – in fact that would have been inconceivable, a contradiction in terms, almost. And there were the Anatolian designs of the houses, the old paintings of people wearing fez hats and baggy trousers, trousers that the old men still wore when I was a child here. There were the old people who sometimes struggled to find a word in Greek and would find a Turkish word instead, and they would laugh, nervously. And there was the yoghurt, which was insistently and authentically Greek yoghurt, but people called Turks the yoghurt-eaters. In my young mind, I did not consciously question all of these strange anomalies, but they stayed with me, as traces.

Folds

- 32 During the summers, there were often one or two yachts that docked in the harbour in Molivos, with deeply tanned foreigners on board. They always had darker tans than anyone else here, and my neighbours in the village worried about them, wondering why they designed boats so that these foreigners could not keep out of the sun, given that they were obviously so rich. Being in the sun was the worst thing imaginable for my neighbours. They watched the tourists go and lie on the beach and bake themselves like a roast lamb for Easter, even basting themselves with oil. Karikleia, the woman who took care of me when my parents were away, or who helped my mother to deal with raising three young and highly unruly children in a village with unpredictable electricity and water only available from the well – Karikleia thought it was some kind of mental affliction of foreigners that they lay in the sun like that. She used to worry about me, too. Every summer I would go out in the sun until my skin blistered. I saw it as a phase until the tan appeared and then there would be no more blistering until next summer. Karikleia thought it might kill me – and she was right, it might have killed me. But my parents laughed at Karikleia, so I didn't take her seriously. She had a donkey, which she let me ride sometimes, and a watermelon patch. Picking watermelons in Karikleia's watermelon patch was one of the most amazing experiences of my childhood. Those watermelons were the best I had ever tasted.
- 33 It was not only the yachts that came to Molivos, though. From time to time, there were also huge grey battle ships that docked in the bay. Sometimes, the ships were Greek, but more often, they were American. People in the village said they did not like America because of those battle ships, even though the villagers were perfectly polite

to the Americans who visited in the summers. There were always one or two American tourists. Sometimes, when my parents went to the Ble Alepou – the Blue Fox – in the centre of town to have dinner, I ran around the restaurant and listened to the local men talk. If they drank a bit, they would start to talk loudly, even shouting, and that's when they began to talk, sometimes, about the American government. Whenever that happened, somebody else in the Blue Fox would shut them up, tell them that this was enough now, that maybe they had had too much to drink, and that it might be time to go home. There was a look of fear in people's eyes in those days; it was not allowed to say certain things, and talking negatively about Americans would mark you out as a communist, and Georgios Papadopoulos would definitely not like that. There were stories around at the time that if you said just one stupid thing – for example, that Papadopoulos's head resembled a potato – he would take you away and put you in prison for the rest of your life. Talking in the wrong way about the American battle ships might get you executed. I looked on, as an eight-year-old, puzzled, but also a bit alarmed. It was quite scary. There were a lot of artists, writers and poets living in Molivos then; they created all kinds of things; but they were not allowed to talk about certain things either, not in their art and not in the Blue Fox.

- 34 When I was young, Molivos was the whole world to me, it was huge, and complicated, and cosmopolitan. I knew there were many other worlds: I saw the unreachable Turkey; I saw the yachts and the American battleships and the tourists who passed through every year; I understood that although I could not go to Turkey, it had been possible before to go there, because people knew the language and could tell me what it used to be like there – sometimes, in quiet moments, old people would tell me what it was like there. The world, with all its rules, its borders, its differences and its jokes as well, were there for me, all folded into the mix.

6. Conclusion

- 35 This brief intervention has introduced a simple idea: that contemporary political borders are crosscut by other kinds of border regime, which affects how people experience the relations and separations between here and somewhere else. The overlaps, the entanglement and the traces of past border regimes that have been papered over with new ones implies that no border system can entirely classify or define the places, peoples or things that it attempts to organize. Many years ago, Doreen Massey spoke about space as being a matter of the «simultaneity of stories-so-far» (Massey 2005: 130); of places involving the «throwntogetherness» (*Ibidem*: 140) of things; and she spoke of space as being fundamentally relational and lively, involving a constant movement of diverse trajectories through and across, always being affected by power-geometries, which warp distances and the shape of things. In this paper, I have instead turned things the other way around, and considered how the co-existence of different power-geometries (in this case, different and overlapping border regimes) results in conditions in which none of them is likely to ever create exactly the effects that were intended.

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- The Crosslocations Project Home Page:

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- The Floats Project Home Page:

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- The National Herald online:

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- The Transit, Trade & Travel Project Home Page:

<https://www.helsinki.fi/en/researchgroups/crosslocations/projects/transit-trade-and-travel>

- UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency, Population Statistics:

<http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/overview>

- *Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository:*

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Supranational_European_Bodies-en.png#file

NOTES

2. See, for example, Bufon et al. (2014); Paasi (2011); Newman (2011); Wilson, Donnan (1994, 2012); Green (2009, 2010, 2012, 2013); van Houtum (2012); van Houtum et al. (2005); Vaughan-Williams (2015).
3. At the time of writing (April 2019), the UK was still a member of the EU. The number of EU member states may be reduced to 26 at some point in the near future.
4. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Supranational_European_Bodies-en.png (last accessed 12.11.2019).
5. These are issues I am exploring in considerable more depth in a research project called Crosslocations (www.helsinki.fi/en/researchgroups/crosslocations, last accessed 12.11.2019). In that project, I am more focused on the concept of “location” than borders, though they are of course related.
6. Turkey has applied for EEC and then EU membership since 1987, making it also quite entangled with the EU.
7. See <http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/overview> (last accessed 12.11.2019).
8. Frontex is a border security organization hired by the EU to assist EU member states to manage borders that are shared with non-EU countries (Aas, Gundhus 2015).
9. www.thenationalherald.com/135185/pope-francis-angelina-jolie-and-susan-sarandon-when-is-your-lesvos-vacation/ (last accessed 12.11.2019).
10. www.nytimes.com/2016/04/17/world/europe/pope-francis-visits-lesbos-heart-of-europes-refugee-crisis.html (last accessed 12.11.2019).
11. 1453 was the year of the fall of Constantinople to Ottoman forces, and effectively, the beginning of the time that Greeks came under Ottoman rule.
12. The original version of this part of the paper was written for a project called Floats (<https://floatsea.org>, last accessed 12.11.2019). It was presented in Molivos, in the old Mosque in the middle of the town, with childhood friends in the audience.

ABSTRACTS

If there is one thing that contemporary borders are supposed to do, it is to clearly separate things out, clearly demarcate the difference between here and somewhere else. It is obvious that this is not always, or perhaps even often, successfully achieved: the world is full of unfinished, contested and overlapping political borders. Drawing first from examples provided by the European Union and Brexit, and then from the past and present experiences of migration and the movement of peoples to and from the island of Lesbos, the paper suggests that understanding borders as being entangled, both with contemporary and past relations and separations from other places, can help in understanding contemporary border dynamics.

Se c'è un compito, che i confini contemporanei sono chiamati a svolgere, è quello di separare chiaramente una cosa dall'altra, di marcare la differenza tra il qui e l'altrove. È ovvio come tale obiettivo non sia sempre raggiunto: il mondo è pieno di confini politici incompleti, contestati e sovrapposti. Dapprima attraverso alcuni esempi riferiti all'Unione Europea e alla Brexit e poi con riferimento alle esperienze passate e presenti di migrazione e movimento di persone verso e dall'isola di Lesbo, l'articolo suggerisce che intendere i confini come intrecciati in relazioni e separazioni, contemporanee e passate, con altri luoghi può aiutare a comprendere le dinamiche confinarie contemporanee.

INDEX

Parole chiave: confini, migrazioni, Lesbo, Unione Europea (UE), localizzazioni incrociate

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