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Theorising Material / Nonmaterial Mediations on the Border

Olga Demetriou and Rozita Dimova

The border as process: Tracing theoretical genealogies

Social analysis has always recognized that politics is invested in the material. Capitalism and nationalism are projects shown to be rooted in the materialities of production, consumption, commodification, and the reconfiguration of definitions of ‘the human’ in relation to the material world. We may trace a trajectory in the materiality-politics nexus from the Hegelian roots of historical materialism, to the Marxist separation between infrastructure and superstructure, through the post-war work of the Frankfurt School on consumerism (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1972; Benjamin 1999a; 1999b; Marcuse 1991), French neo-Marxist takes on subjectivity (Althusser, 1971), and critical theory strands on human-thing assemblages (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Latour 2005). In this theoretical trajectory materiality is the result of power dynamics obfuscated by the seemingly nonmaterial, which, however, also has material underpinnings. Analytic attention to these, blurs the distinction between materiality and non-materiality but makes politics more visible in the process.

Space, architecture, and visual art have offered particularly strong examples of how the material and ideological consolidation of the modern capitalist state takes place (Harvey, 2009; Gupta and Ferguson, 1997; Thrift, 2005). These fields of production have been scrutinised for their role as conduits between materiality and ideology most notably since Benjamin’s studies of Parisian arcades (1999a). In this volume, we draw on insights from these strands of thinking to examine the implications of the material/non-material constitution of borders. For unlike space, architecture, and visual art, borders, being perhaps more immediately metonymic of ‘the state’, seem to have received an altogether different treatment in the theorisation of their materiality until very recently.

Borders have been widely conceptualised as symbolic of the ‘nation’ and/or ‘state’ since the pioneering work of Donnan and Wilson (1998). More recently, advances in technology and shifts in the definition of ‘security’ have prompted an interest in the ways in which borders change (see Rumford, 2006 for an overview). An object-like materiality may not be the most appropriate way to conceptualise borders, it has been argued; borders should instead be seen as processes (Newman, 2006). And yet, their materiality, as lines on the ground or on maps, continues to be

taken for granted. That is to say, discussion has all too often proceeded from the assumption of a smooth line of separation to question the manifestations of governing difference and connection within the state. Thus, border studies often seem to take borders as de facto material manifestations of state apparatuses even though emerging literature has sought to question this. Paasi, for example, argues that new spatialities of networks that extend above and below the state are reconfiguring borders in globalisation as ideological apparatuses for territorial power (Paasi, 2009). Agnew proposes a new conceptualisation of borders stemming from a redefinition of political community 'as not being co-extensive with nation-state' (2008: 186). Going further, Van Houtum suggests that we see the border as a lie, promising the desire for (comm)unity while masking the fear of incompleteness (Van Houtum, 2010: 126). These studies effectively question the view of the border as the limit where the capitalist nation-state, contested and re-created at its centre, becomes fixed (see also Balibar, 2009).

The fact that the state apparatuses congealing around a border actually hover between materiality and ideology in the forms of nation-state ideologies, territorial claims, or discourses of community, alerts us to the need for closer scrutiny of borders as key structures in this mediation between materiality and abstraction. In this volume, we focus on exactly this mediation. Our emphasis is neither on the ontology of borders (what they are, or what they are not) nor their function (what they do), but rather on the question of how the relationship between materiality and abstraction is established. We explore the relationship between what borders are and what they do and the ways in which function affects their perceptions and vice versa. We see, in other words the processual aspect of borders as a question of this mediation.

In contrast to buildings, documents, films, statues, markets, bodies, or arcades, political philosophy has only recently turned to borders as a field within which to think materiality and politics. The scrutiny of capitalism, liberalism, and sovereignty, this volume shows, needs to take the border into account, most obviously because it is a node between the levels such scrutiny tries to connect: state, inter-state, local, supra-national, global, etc. In pointing this out we also want to also address the persistence in border studies to dwell primarily on the connections between state, territory, sovereignty and space but less on the more mediated ideologies they call forth (i.e. beyond the statist 'us' and 'them'). In this volume we want to highlight the intrinsic question of materiality that underlies that of borders. Hence, our question here is how these connections produce frames of governance anew. How, in other words, the border comes to be a process.

Thinking borders through metaphors

In each of the cases that make up the present volume the materialities of the border are deeply implicated in the reproduction of political ideology, its shifts and changes. The borders in Greece, Turkey and Cyprus, Olga Demetriou shows, which were erected on the premises of particular configurations in the Greco-Turkish dispute are now being re-configured in the frame of migration-control priorities. Yet this grand shift of frame is still grounded in both infrastructural and ideological premises. Rather than overhauling them, it appears to have been subsumed by them. Looking closer at the intricate connections, analysed through the idiom of *imbrication*, between these infrastructures and ideologies we begin to see the contours of exclusion that provide the continuities between older and new frames and priorities: militarism, an ethnicity-citizenship dyad, a peripheral role within the West. In other case studies, we see continuities of colonialism and cascading hierarchies of state power. Chiara de Cesari exemplifies that in an Italy-Libya treaty that comes to silently index EU-sub-Saharan migrant relations. The materiality of the document makes a difference to what is stated and what remains unstated and it is through another materiality, that of the Libyan desert, erased prison camps and current migrant detention centres, that the silence gains its force. We are thus prompted to ask, as Tuija Pulkkinen does, what political materialities exist prior to the border and how they change after its establishment. Her examples of state and sexuality borders demonstrate clearly the problems involved in imagining 'Finns' or 'homosexuals' before the demarcations, political in different ways, established what is and what is not. These demarcations have been attended, as political projects, by materialities that drew lines on the ground and in law and it is through those materialities that 'Finns' and 'homosexuals' came into being as specific kinds of people.

The line then, as designation of the border is in question. Sarah Green explores this central proposition by considering linear vis-à-vis other images of borders. *Traces*, she argues, are of particular relevance to the thinking of borders as process. But they need not replace the concept of line; rather, they can be read alongside it. Green posits that the critique of linear border thinking has shown precisely the salience of that linear image, especially as state-centric. In therefore exploring other venues, such as trace, we always need to open up the question of why lines persist. And in looking at the two simultaneously, Green offers the concept of 'tidemark' as a productive way for re-thinking the line-ness and trace-producing processes that attend borders. Stef Jansen illustrates the implications of this as he examines bus routes and property purchases in Sarajevo that reinstate and solidify an otherwise absent border. The Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL), he

argues, is exemplary of how borders may be much more than just lines, but in the case of polity borders, they are lines nevertheless. It is thus the salience of that line-ness that we must pay close attention to. On the Greek side of the Prespa lakes, Lenio Myrivili argues, the seeming lack of border policing infrastructures is deceptive: policemen and rifles emerge in fishermen's imaginations as soon as steering a boat across an unseen but thoroughly internalised border is suggested. That line-ness of the border is for Myrivili replete with traces. And these traces are ghostly. Urging us to see the border as *ghost*, Myrivili is able to examine the processes of statecraft that are predicated on secrecy and the foreclosure of knowledge. And while these processes arise through specific materialities on the border, they point to the heart of state politics. They do this through a *ripple* effect, Rozita Dimova suggests in her chapter. She shows how the Greek-Macedonian dispute ripples to the centre of the city in the form of statues and monuments. Juxtaposing this monumentality to the lack of conflict symbols on the border, Dimova shows how the mediation between materialities and immaterialities takes on different modalities in the centre and at the borders of the state, which are nevertheless connected and reinforce each other. The economics of connection at the border, we might posit, amplify the economics of conflictual nationalism in the centre of Skopje.

In each of these cases, metaphors are the vehicles through which questions of materiality come to bear specifically on the study of borders: how do borders have presence if they are not seen, as in the Prespa lake or Sarajevo? How different is this presence from that of the border which is seen, even feared, celebrated, or enjoyed, as in Nicosia, Skopje or the Aegean? At those instants when a particular space is imagined as a border, it is a political imagination that is at work. Imbrications, traces, ghosts, and ripples reference this political work. They each show in different ways that it is not only border guards, passport scanners, or stamps that enact the state at those points. It is also bodies, thoughts, gestures, comportment. The relation between one and the other is one of dependence, and it is this dependence that often falls by the wayside when we preference one viewpoint over another. Moreover, this dependence creates 'publics', both at the border and in the heartland of states and communities. These publics may be xenophobic, or anti-racist if the dependence is rooted in the securitisation of migration. Or they may be tourist, or consumerist if the dependence is centred on the enjoyment of the border. They may be tax-paying or utility-dependent if the border is invested with infrastructure or delimits the extension of power and water grids. Scrutinising how the materialities of soil, water, buildings, grids, paper, and so on, are shaped by borders, but also how they reproduce them, sheds new light on the proposition that borders extend everywhere.

We thus want to examine borders as a political condition. For if the proliferation of borders is a sign of our age, then ‘borders’ cannot be taken as simply a ‘case’ for study, an example, a localised phenomenon. They should evidence an underlying arrangement. This arrangement, we propose, can be shown in the processes of mediation between materialities and immaterialities that take shape around borders. Through ethnographic and philosophical explorations of this mediation, the volume seeks to throw light on the interaction between the materiality of state borders and the non-material aspects of state-making. This enables, it is shown, a new understanding of borders as productive of the politics of materiality, on which both the state project rests, including in its multifarious forms in the post-nation-state era.

We therefore explore materiality as a political site. This means inserting the analysis of borders and bordering into the question about what constitutes materiality, what escapes it, and whether the material can ever be seen in disjunction from the non-material. As we will show, materiality is enmeshed with immateriality. Consequently, borders exist on both material and nonmaterial registers and produce material configurations, actions, and abstractions that straddle the material and nonmaterial worlds. The notions of ‘difference’, ‘division’, and ‘connection’, which emanate from the border, wherever it may be located, are understood within this frame.

Symbolic (b)orders and the material

A binary opposition between materiality and immateriality (or non-materiality) is obviously a problematic position to start with. Can something be outside the material, and should we consider concepts, thoughts, or ideas as nonmaterial? An important move beyond the Cartesian dichotomy is Lacan’s symbolic order, which he would claim is material. Lacan’s concept of the symbolic order – the order of language, signification and meaning – is a domain of materiality. Everything that is symbolised and signified (marked), either consciously or unconsciously, is material. And yet, the symbolic order is predicated on an un-symbolisable element that resists being caught up in the symbolic web of signification (an excess). This immaterial, un-symbolisable element is actually the Lacanian Real, which becomes a leftover or a surplus generated by the symbolic order, and yet, is not absorbed by it. What are the conditions that allow the possibility for resistance of this element(s) to being caught up in a web of material significations? In Lacanian thought, rather than making a distinction between material vs. nonmaterial, we should see these two registers as mutually constitutive in which the one depends

on the other (or is operationalised through the other). This take on the negotiation between materiality and immateriality points to the moment at which critical theory comes to connect production to the politics of ideology.

This insight hovers at the background of the theoretical discussions that many of the chapters engage in. It is certainly relevant to the Derridean take on 'trace', on which Pulkkinen, Green, and Myrivili dwell extensively. It is also relevant to the dynamics between the visible and the unsaid, explored by de Cesari and Demetriou. But it is also relevant to the philosophical and anthropological concerns of the volume as a whole, as it has implications for disciplinary borders too. The ethnographic examination offered by many of the contributions, seeks to identify what happens when different regimes generate new materialities or webs of signification, and what kind of leftovers (surpluses) unintentionally emerge out of the processes of materialisation and signification. Neither the cultural nor psychoanalytic aspects of this question are 'neutral'. There is a political assumption in Lacan, when he frames the 'surplus' as formed out of 'resistance' to symbolisation or failure to be symbolised. What is the energy of these 'kernels of resistance', we then ask, that are generated by these materialities, and yet, are the sites of subversion, agency and disruption? How do we locate sites of subversion, agency and disruption in these materialities?

An unexpected theoretical site, perhaps, for a discussion of borders and materiality is Badiou's political philosophy, which exemplifies how the concept of border influences and structures otherwise abstract thinking on politics, even when the word is not invoked. Badiou's work, notably influenced by Lacan, locates exactly such disruptions and subversions. What Badiou calls an 'Event' is a form of such a disruption. An Event is of primary significance and distinguishable from any other happening because it disrupts the constitution of subjectivity, it inaugurates a new subject. Post-Event, we are completely changed, as are the conditions that constitute our subjectivity. In those conditions lie forms of materialities that give rise and determine the Event. Materiality in Badiou is thus contained within a given universe, a set. Yet, the precondition of the Event, is located 'on the edge of the void' (2006: 175). In other words, it is ultimately the border that provides the basis for agency. This proposition is nowhere more immediate than in the image of the person who 'is not registered and remains clandestine' which Badiou uses as the most concrete example of an evental site (2006: 174). The border determines both the materialities of the situation (absence of papers), as well as the nonmaterial forms by which these materialities are exceeded (the Event). The connection between the two is intrinsic and political. An 'inconsistent or rioting crowd', Badiou elsewhere suggests, is 'an emblem of [the

government's] void' and what it squarely refuses to tolerate (2006: 109). Badiou's theory, although not often read as border theory, exemplifies that view of transgression, as Jansen puts it, 'in which authors often locate emancipatory potential [but in doing so actually] reinforce rather than weaken conceptions of borders-as-lines' (Jansen, this volume). In ethnographically querying this view, the contributors here find much less emancipation than the position at the edge of the void would suggest. This philosophy of potentiality, it would seem, needs to be rethought exactly, we argue, on these premises of political materiality.

To view borders in terms of the political mediation between materiality and ideology, also requires that we think of the connection between borders and history in Benjamin's terms. In his 'Arcades project' Benjamin claimed to be a historical detective who could unveil historical knowledge which is the only antidote that could oppose the dream-like state of consciousness at this time – a time of industrial modernity and conspicuous consumption (Benjamin 1999a; Buck-Morss 1989). As Benjamin strips history of its legitimising, and ideological function, 'history is abandoned as a conceptual structure that deceptively transfigures the present, its cultural contents are redeemed as the source of critical knowledge that alone can place the present into question' (Buck-Morss 1989: x). Our attempt to bridge the material and the abstract in this volume is animated by these perspectives, as they apply to the questions of what historical debris in today's borders means politically and what kind of Events it may anticipate or foreclose. Benjamin's work reminds us that the materiality of borders must pay attention not only to Events but also evental sites and 'Events' that never sprang forth. A historical materialism of borders evaluates absences, agencies, and ruptures on the limits of material structures and the (unthinkable) void. What if other wars or other conflicts, or indeed other collaborations had taken place here? What if the clandestine agencies encountered brought about other Events than those we have come to know as History? How might these agencies have been otherwise, on Prespa, and in Thrace, Sarajevo, Skopje, Libya, or Finland?

Rethinking binary logics in the governmentality of borders

The chapters in this volume explore shifts of meaning and shifts in border processes together. The history of Greco-Turkish relations is visible in Nicosia's Green Line and the idiosyncratic path of the border in western Thrace. That history today allows and bars specific individuals from moving across it in different ways. The dispute over the name of the state of Macedonia (Republic of Macedonia, FYROM, Skopje) is marked on the squares of the capital of Skopje today and impacts on the perceptions and uses of space. Colonial camps and detention centres

haunt the realm of Libyan-European relations today even though they are very differently configured. Battle lines during the siege of Sarajevo also haunt residents' property and accommodation decisions decades after the end of the war. Traces of past wars are arguably still embodied in corporeal shifts that mark the Prespa border so that the violence of the Hoxha regime is remembered in a body that shirks from venturing just a little too far in a speed boat.

Attention to these shifts destabilises out intuitive understanding of the political. For according to that understanding, the political is undoubtedly about bordering: at its core lies the separation between similarity and difference. It might thus seem that despite attempts to criticise the intuitive perspective that what borders do is to **divide** (between two parts), the political work of borders remains this because the political itself is by definition a project of di-vision (in the sense of 'seeing in twos'). This central position that 'border' occupies in the thinking about the political is also the very platform on which the materiality of borders is established: a space where material and conceptual merge, where 'political' can no longer be exclusively equated to 'ideological' without infrastructural underpinnings, power cannot be divided between mental and physical forms. 'Border' thus becomes productive exactly of this knot of materiality and politics.

From this perspective, we ask what results from this production. Border-making in its various manifestations is both symptomatic of but also informs the political, itself also manifested as multiple dualities. By disentangling these political formations at each instance we might better understand the disjunctions and continuities that inform what Foucault called 'governmentality' (2004) – the logic of organising people and things in particular ways so as to make populations more manageable. Colonialism, migration, bilateral disputes, financial cooperation, and so on, are all frames of (dual) thinking that stem from the assumption of 'border' (as divisive) and reproduce ways of being that straddle, mediate, and struggle against, divisions.

This question brings into view the reconsideration of subjectivity as a form in which the mediation also between materiality and immateriality is achieved in the context of power relations. This reconsideration brings into perspective the interaction of people and place. What kinds of subjects do borders produce (crossers, citizens/aliens, consumers, policy-makers) and to what extent is the materiality of borders sustained or undermined by these forms of subjectivity? What are the diachronic connections and disconnections between material borders and the identities they give rise to, circumscribe, exclude, and govern? What kinds of structures (material and conceptual) sustain and undermine borders? In critically exploring the mediation between

material / immaterial we ask what the interaction with, contemplation and experience of borders enables. When does agency (as corollary to power) begin to be reconstituted as more complex but also a clearer instance of state-subject relations?

New materialities in the government of borders, from biometric technology and satellite-assisted patrolling to humanitarian practice, have brought the Foucauldian notions of governmentality and biopolitics to the forefront of border studies (Epstein, 2007; Muller, 2008; Salter, 2008; Walters, 2011; Rygiel, 2010; Andersson, 2014; Tazzioli, 2015). A point of convergence in this literature is the need to look at border infrastructures as constitutive of the populations that states and their assemblages (be it supra-state entities or ‘non-state’ agencies) govern. The materialities that constitute such populations are not only the fences, the cameras, the guards, the controls, or the physical landscape of a border. They are also the passports, the documents that substitute them, the spaces and people involved in the production of such documents (legal as well as ‘fake’), the laws and policies guiding the use and abuse of such documents, the tools for implementing those laws, and the bodily effects of such implementation. These are all different levels on which these materialities may be intuitively tied to the border. They are modalities of materiality, as Althusser (1971) proposed.

They are also the discourses (in verbal, written, or acted forms, communicated *en masse* or inter-subjectively) that give meaning to concepts of ‘security’, ‘desire’, ‘freedom’, and so on. While some of these materialities may be intuitively tied to the border, a thoroughly politicised mediation takes shape the moment each of them comes into being. The law paints the continuum between citizenship and deportation. A passport references the poles of security and its absence. These mediations are not located on the border, they proliferate within states, in the high seas, and in the black holes of sovereign exceptions. Borders are the mechanisms (*dispositifs*), in a Foucauldian reading, of a governmentality that structures the field of the political well beyond them (see also Demetriou, 2013).

And while the structures of borders and the structures of the political are mutually constitutive, they are also in a constant shift in their interrelations. Texture and fluidity have provided strong metaphors to articulate these connections. The political significance of state borders may wax and wane through changing visa regimes and border controls but traces are nevertheless left of the border that used to be or the border that was absent (Green, this volume). From another perspective, the political may take on specific material forms at power centres away from the

border, which are eventually transported at different intensities, like tidal waves to the border periphery (Dimova, 2013). These shifts take on potent materialities as they impact on the register of 'subject'. Who is or is not a citizen, a visa national, an illegal is a product not only of the law or the border regime at a given time, but also of concepts that preceded it – e.g. of the nation-state, of morality, or of kin and economic alliances. It is equally important to study those shifts and the violences that attended them as 'critical events' (Das, 1995) in the formation of both the border and the political, as it is to explore their pasts and their legacies (Demetriou, this volume). Studying the border from the point of view of political subjectivity affords this perspective into the temporal aspect of the material-(im)material mediation.

Subjects, objects, and the modalities of political materiality

At the same time, the focus on shifts, critical events, and the agency that attends them opens up the question of the 'subject' and the centrality of the 'human' in that conceptual construct vis-à-vis the agency of materiality and objects. In the materiality analysis of actor-network theory the distinction between humans and non-humans is erased, along the lines of network-like ontology where non-human beings are part of the social fabric. In *Reassembling the Social*, Latour (2005) extends the faculty of subject on non-human beings and objects. (Latour 2005: 50-52) and thus his Actor Network Theory introduces the role of the actor (actant) where he divorces agency from human beings and insists that anything that is a source of action, and anything that is able to propose their own understanding of action, has a capacity to act (ibid.:57).

Along similar lines, archaeologists have made major contributions to theorising the power of objects. Hodder's work in the Baringo area in Tanzania, for instance, rejected the view that material culture only reflects, mirrors, or expresses behavior (Hodder 1982: 38). He argued that artifacts do not have only a passive role: while material culture does reflect and express groups' identities and their competition, it is evident that 'material culture can actively justify the actions and intentions of human groups and that symbols are actively involved in social strategies' (ibid.: 38). The power of symbols and signs, and the ensuing (layered) contexts of meaning (such as rooms, sites, pits or burials) 'seize the muteness of objects' (Hodder 1982: 5).

Similarly, drawing on her research on object worlds in ancient Egypt, Meskell argues that 'the Egyptian project of materiality was so complex and central within the lifeworld that its potency could promise to secure the future, and similarly threaten to manifest eternal annihilation' (Meskell 2004: 10). The agency of the material world thus reveals that the Egyptian construction

of the subjects and objects was a complex process, where the two were 'porous, overlapping, sometimes indistinguishable entities' (ibid. :10), with the possibility of objects to assume 'new taxonomic roles as beings, deities, oracles, agents, mediators and so on' (ibid.:6). This new move in archaeology away from environment, economics, motivations, or meanings, engages in the dialectics of people and things, where subjects and objects are collapsible in particular contexts (Meskell and Pels 2005: 4).

These dialectics is present in the chapters that follow as they analyse the power shifts and dynamics of separations and connections. The materiality of borders that we examine here unfolds on a multiplicity of levels, on each of which the material is enmeshed into the abstract. This enmeshment complicates the dyads not only of subject and object, but also material/immaterial, concrete/abstract, and visibility/invisibility.

In the first instance, there is the landscape of the border, visualised chiefly in the form of the state border, complete with signs, surveillance posts and devices, crossings, checks, guards, etc. This landscape of the border may be abstracted through the notion of 'environment': a sea border is different to a river border, as the case of eastern Greece, Cyprus, and Italy show (Demetriou, de Cesari), and different to a lake or land border, as the case of northern and western Greece does (Myrivili, Dimova). But that difference is not exhausted in the materiality of that 'environment' per se. The form of liquidity (sea, river, lake) determines the kind of controls established, in other words, the forms of governing that border. In turn, the arrangement of people and objects that this governmentality organises also produces the political subjectivities coming into being on those borders: the 'trespasser' is differentiated as rescued boatperson, smuggler, Albanian, fisherman, etc. This has implications for the practices that may or may not take place in the moment of crossing, in anticipation of it, and after it (arrest, surveillance, shooting, destruction of documents, payments, forgery, overfishing). So the abstraction of the border materiality yields not only the concept of 'environment' but also 'control'. These in turn are not nonmaterial concepts, they are thoroughly materialisable as actions, effects on bodies and objects, and transformative moments. The material and non-material become thoroughly enmeshed into each other so that 'landscape', 'environment', and 'control' are no longer forms of materiality propelled onto the plane of ideology, action, and affect. They are the planes upon which materiality and non-materiality are mediated.

This mediation imbricates all levels where the material and non-material are enmeshed. As a second such level, we identify that of documentation. Treaties that decide where the border should be set, passports that identify people as citizens, visas that facilitate their crossing, are all forms of materialities that mediate the abstract notion of 'law'. The practices associated with crossing and/or failing to cross a border as exemplified above are linked back to these materialities as they are invoked to legitimise or delegitimise entry, exit, and their interruptions. As a political device, the border accentuates the stakes in this mediation, rendering, for example, the difference a passport makes a difference that touches on the boundary between life and death (by drowning, shooting, or mine explosion, for example) rather than 'simply' (to the extent that incarceration can ever be a simple matter) a difference between freedom and its lack (through arrest, but also equally forced labour endured for sake of escaping arrest, as in trafficking). So material and nonmaterial are enmeshed, imbricated rather, concrete and abstract are interactive, practice and ideology co-productive. The metaphor of imbrication is taken by Demetriou in her chapter as a way of connecting these different levels and thinking about their complex relations in tandem. The mediation between all these is where we see the political as emerging. The political is a process, in other words. A process, we might further add, that is circular or spiral, where subjects and objects co-emerge. Difference (friend-enemy, self-other) are recurring poles perhaps, but always shifting in content, and expanding or contracting in the breadth of their representation.

Size and grandeur can also have agency in shaping people's perceptions and reactions to material appearances (Dimova 2013). The material presence of conspicuously-decorated houses in Macedonia for instance have had an effect on residents that could be viewed as part of the 'baroque mechanism' (Lambert 2004) with its main feature to move the spectator and to unleash feelings of wonder, amazement or disorientation (ibid.: 28). This sublime effect of the Baroque mechanism could, in effect, be at work in other situations when the size and outlook of materiality may suddenly affect the observer and thus shape how people view each other. Dimova's chapter in this volume reveals how the 'displaced borders' at the center of the capital of Macedonia, Skopje are materialised through grand buildings and monuments referring to a classical past and antiquity. This trend that started in 2008, and is part of the *Skopje 2014* project, is conditioned by the political dispute with Greece about the right to use the name Macedonia. While on the Greek-Macedonian border itself there is an absence of any markers referring to this conflict, the center of the capital Skopje has become the primary battleground of the symbolic and aesthetic borders built not only between the Republic of Macedonia and Greece, but also

between Macedonia, Europe and the rest of the world that has been seen as complicit with the Greek denial of the right to use the constitutional name 'Macedonia' by the governing structures in Macedonia.

At each of these levels of mediation we thus see a predominance of shift and change. Shifts in materiality prompt changes in political subjectivity, even if those changes take place for the sake of stabilising those very subjectivities. As Navaro-Yashin shows of Turkish-Cypriots, for example, the uncanny ways in which things emit affect in Northern Cyprus are conceptually worked upon to re-habilitate discomfort and integrate it into the political everyday (2012). We return here to the notion of 'community' as the primary abstraction of what the border creates. In the impossibility of its foundation we see the very shift that gives rise to political subjectivity: 'community' always needs an immutability which is unattainable (nation-state homogeneity, stereotype of 'our people', etc). In this dialectic between immutability and unattainability the subjects of 'minority', 'dissent', 'margins', and 'the periphery' emerge. And as they proliferate, 'normalcy', 'majority', 'typicality', lose their ground as normative structures and begin to disappear.

We recall here that Barth rooted the enquiry about borders into the mutability of 'change': description and ascription changes and as it does so, the border may shift as well between 'inside' and 'outside'. If we are then to insist on this shift as fundamental to the political materiality of borders, we must also ask about the limit: how much shift is tolerable before 'community' morphs into something else? Is it a matter of gradual change? As Green put it, how much difference makes a difference (2005)? Jean-Luc Nancy (1991) has forcefully argued the point that 'community' is always a question of co-emergence. It does not pre-exist the individual, nor is it separate from individuals. It is always a challenge to individuality because it happens at the point of interaction, when part of that 'individuality' is already being lost (see also Demetriou, 2013). A border then wedges itself into the welding together of individual and community, disappearing as it does so but nevertheless conceptually instrumental (see also Pulkkinen, this volume). Materiality and immateriality can no longer be distinguished or extracted from each other.

It is at this limit that 'evental sites' (Badiou, 2006) may be located. 'Community' begins to be rethought when the self is repositioned vis-à-vis a radical other. It would thus seem that the outside, what is unaccounted for, or outside the 'set' is what drives the materiality of the border arrangement. But even after such 'events', after such ruptures of subjectivity traces remain of has

been. Borders leave their marks, both as they recede and as they are reaffirmed. Population shifts for example, in Greece and Cyprus, have both destabilised the notions ‘Greek’ and ‘Turk’ and reaffirmed the efficacy of their opposition in the face of its material undermining (e.g. through the presence of minorities and refugees considered ‘other’). Those shifts have left their mark on the understandings of current migration dynamics, where ‘others’ may no longer be ‘Turks’ but the efficacy of the border as a Greco-Turkish one remains.

As the volume explores these shifts and connections, the authors of the chapters offer different propositions about reconceptualising borders and political materialities. In the following three chapters, different premises for examining border materialities are addressed. Conceptually, Olga Demetriou uses the idiom of imbrication as a conceptual tool for enriching the analyses of the connections at the heart of the volume: politics, materiality, and borders. Chiara De Cesari sets out a temporal and juridical premise providing an ethnography of this border time, paying close attention to the relations between Italy and Libya in the last years of the Gaddafi era and the historical memories and forgettings that they embody. Philosophically, Tuija Pulkkinen takes further the theoretical lines we have sketched in the introduction to compare Derrida’s and Deleuze’s offerings on the conceptualization of borders and materiality.

Following that, Sarah Green’s chapter inaugurates the second half of the volume which engages in a conversation on particular aspects of border materialities: lines, traces and tidemarks. This second part distills beautifully the numerous discussions out of which the volume and the present series emerged, in the context of the COST-funded network ‘Eastbordnet’, which Green chaired. Placed right at the centre of the volume then, her chapter on lines, traces and tidemarks reflects the centrality of these theoretical takes. In direct response to this, Stef Jansen’s chapter takes up the question of line, while Lenio Myrivili’s chapter reconfigures the concept of trace into ‘ghost’. Finally, Dimova’s chapter appropriately closes the volume by revisiting temporality and space together under the metaphor of waves, rippling inwards from the border, and echoing many of the themes and images that populate the volume.

Conclusion: Four positions on the political materiality of borders

In concluding, we would like to recapitulate some of the points that have guided our thinking in putting this volume together. Firstly, we see borders as marking the points at which materiality and immateriality becomes indistinguishable. They do this because they emerge exactly out of the

limitation in which structural binaries fail. In this sense, borders may be said to be symptoms of post-structuralism, in the manner outlined in the theoretical literature surveyed here.

Secondly, we posit that even though borders have so far been studied as political devices par excellence, it is in the enmeshment of materiality and immateriality that emerges through 'border' that we want to locate the political. The reading of a piece of paper as 'law' is invested with powers of state, knowledge, policing, etc. However, it is not that 'paper' and 'law' stand on either side of the material-nonmaterial divide. They are both constituted in the folding of materialities and immaterialities into each other (state, courts, police, etc). Our aim is to explore such forms of the political without reducing the analysis to that binary of 'materiality' that would take 'law', 'police', 'courts', 'treaties', etc as given.

Thirdly, we have identified a number of modalities on which this enmeshment comes into being: landscape, text, and architecture. Others can also be cited: corporeality, aesthetics, infrastructure. By looking at how borders mediate the enmeshment of materiality and immateriality on each of these modalities, we reveal specific techniques of how the political of borders comes into being.

Fourthly, we call for attention to temporal aspects of border practices and to shifts in the mediations that we are examining. Attention to this shifts therefore, allows us to conceptualise anew questions of subjectivity, agency, community, change. The challenge of this volume is in bringing these aspects together to forge new perspectives in border research.

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