

# Preface

In the introduction to their *Border as Method*, Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson consider the strategic role of borders “in the fabrication of the world”. Borders, they note, “far from serving merely to block or obstruct the passage of people, money or objects, have become central devices for their articulation” (2013, p. 3). Political geographers have begun to turn their critical attention to this “productive” function of borders and border-making, and this volume is an important contribution in that regard, analyzing the myriad of initiatives that make up the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) through the lens of an ever-shifting play of re- and cross-bordering.

As Mezzadra and Neilson suggest, the play of borders should be seen in a frontier-like logic of “the creative destruction and constant recombining of spaces and times”, a continuous process of “geographical disruption [and] rescaling” of the territorialities of wealth and power (2013, p. 6). The ENP, as the shifting frontier of EU power and actorness, is a perfect example of such logic, where re- and cross-bordering processes work to produce ever-new constellations of sovereignty, governmentality, wealth and power. The current volume carefully traces some of the geographies of these processes, going “Beyond Fortress ‘EU’rope”, as it announces in the title of its opening chapter, and looking precisely to the “productive” making of the ‘EU’ropean neighbourhood as the EU’s extended and extensive borderspace/scape. In doing so, it complicates easy distinctions between the visibly hardening EU external borders and the variety of ways in which the Union’s actions and actors spill beyond and across them, noting how such concurrent openness and closure, collaboration and securitization, are not at all contradictory but, actually, part of the very same process/project of the making of spaces for ‘EU’rope.

Such a nuanced geographical perspective on the making of the neighbourhood provides an important counterpart to the existing literature in International Relations and European Studies, still strongly marked by ‘diffusionist’ understandings of the externalization of EU governance and the stretching of EU spaces and actions. As the chapters in this volume highlight, rather, what we are witnessing is not simply a spread of EU actorness across space or into ever wider spaces, but rather a much more complex and fluid process of the reworking the confines of what and where Europe is; a series of constantly shifting, “productive” re-articulations of

European economic but also political-juridical and regulatory spaces. Indeed, as the contributions here note, Neighbourhood region-making, whether in the Mediterranean or at the EU's Eastern borders involves a multiplicity of political and economic projects at a variety of geographical scales, sometimes complementary but often contradictory. The discussion of cross border regions and Macro-region initiatives to which the book devotes considerable attention highlights this very diversity, noting how such making of 'European spaces' is built on a shifting and tenuous balance between integration and exclusion, and an ongoing re-definition of what is to be shared, how, and with whom, choosing to make selectively mobile certain categories of capital, goods, labour and investment.

The analysis offered here also does not forget the wider geographical context for EU actions, for the ENP of course does not exist in a geopolitical vacuum. It is the EU's frontier, but also one where the Union comes into direct competition with other global actors such as Russia, China and the United States, as geopolitical/geoeconomic challengers but also as ideational competitors. The making of neighbourhood spaces for 'EU' rope is hardly uncontested, and indeed increasingly runs into alternative projects of political and economic region-making that explicitly counter EU agendas of democratization and neo-liberal trade promotion (whether in the Ukraine, or North Africa). Such attention to the multiple geographies that both frame and are framed by EU neighbourhood initiatives is crucial in capturing their complexity, and brings to the fore their power as, above all, modes of "productive" re-bordering.

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