

# European Borders: New Materialist Approach and Beyond

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Today in the globalized world people should willingly live in a society which contains vast diversity and risk. There is no chance of returning to European world where all borders can be reinstated. The article is aimed to discuss methodological approaches to the intersection between mobility and security. Borders and border regions are particularly revealing places for social research, especially in the present era of growing globalization. Philosophical analysis came a very important for understanding a new processes and events that open and developing during last ten years on European borders. As result, interdisciplinary method and researches start to be only method which has possibility to explain the situation of “new border normality”.

Border is a place where “past” and “future” are permanently clashed. In the new materialists’ view, the “past” is open to change. History suggests that borders and borderlands are territories where a possibility to “repair” the “now” situation exists (Karen Barad and Donna Haraway). This kind of “diffraction patterns” are not simply reflections, they are not reflected in a specific place, instead, they produce changes in public consciousness. The massive ongoing refugee crisis in Europe is an example of such kind of diffraction, which, in reality, not only is a concentration of current wars and conflicts, but also represents the “past” long history of injustice and political mistakes. The nowadays meaning of European external borders includes survival, resistance and an attempt of escape from the armed conflicts, ongoing violence, persecution and instability in origin countries, ecological disasters and economic difficulties. In European landscape has visible important actor - a refugee.

**Keywords:** border, border functions, de-territorialization, European migration crisis, new materialism, re-territorialization.

## **Introduction. A new way of perceiving Europe’s borders**

In the past year the renewed attention to borders was extended to the practice of book titling.

The ongoing European refugee crisis is an example of “diffraction” which in

reality is not only a concentration of current wars and conflicts, but also represents the long history of injustice, political and social mistakes. It has atomized into a chaotic series of border confrontations and diplomatic disputes, prompting the European Union to warn that the concept of European unity was at risk. Border

controls appear to negate the most visible achievement of European integration. The present state is totalizing the discourse on illegal immigrants as the incomprehensible alien, radical and absolute Other. Today we observe a paradoxical situation where humanitarian practices often lead to lethal border conditions.

A new way of thinking about Europe's borders challenged necessity of a provocative and timely reflection on the debate of border security and migration management in Europe. All of that immediately found a response in researching literature which offers critical perspectives on current migration policies, detention and deportation, border controls during the recent years. First of all, borders' researchers have discovered a necessity of re-thinking such concepts as European migration crisis, the process of re-bordering, the change of European border function, the new role of the European borderlands and the meaning of materiality in the border context. The idea "to move from a geopolitical to a biopolitical horizon of thinking" inspired by Foucault and Agamben, gave possibility to develop a more pluralized and radicalized view about the place of borders in the modern political life.

Borders and border regions are particularly revealing places for social research, especially in the present era of growing globalization, and the growth of supra-state regions such as the European Union (EU). The present article situates the growing interest in "borderlands" in a set of overlapping contemporary cultural and theoretical concerns. Present-day research literature provides us with such definitions as *nar-*

*rating space, mapping identities, sovereignty without territoriality, disappearances and strengthening of borders*, which are very close to metaphors. All of them are connected with the problems of space, territoriality and borders. The study of territory and borders now constitutes a multi-disciplinary research, drawn by political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, geographers and lawyers. Many authors point to the important links between borders and identity, as well as the cultural meaning of the distinction between "us" and "them". The significance of the South-Eastern borders of Europe is currently changing.

The aim of the article is to develop a new approach to studying changes in the periphery of Europe through exploring the process in which borders themselves become visible, strengthening, meaningful or disappearing, while simultaneously focusing on what those borders separate and what they bring together, along with the impact of remaking borders, which means studying understandings of possible futures as well as the past. At the same time, European borders from North to South are covered by migration processes. For refugees, the Southern European borderlands are the place of entrance and the North-Western borderlands are the place of destination.

### **European borders: meanings, definitions, functions**

Throughout centuries, the process of construction and deconstruction of various types of borders has been an important part of human civilizations' history. Many

famous voices of neo-liberalists and globalists tell us that the end of both history and geography is near, borders will disappear and humanity will live in a global village, a postmodern and deterritorialized hyperspace created by the processes of globalization. In support of this view, Anssi Paasi complements that today “the key theme is role of territorial factor at various spatial scales and “the meanings of territoriality in a rapidly changing globalizing world, where many supposedly established and fixed elements of political geography, such as nation-state, boundaries and territoriality are seriously challenged”<sup>1</sup>.

The present era of growing globalization and European border crisis integrates sociological, political and philosophical analyses as well as the questions of migration and borders, which stand at the core of critical, radical geography and other social sciences. The study of borders is not a new phenomenon; it has a fertile past and, considering that during the past few decades it has evolved into an interdisciplinary field, the future is also appealing. Today nobody is questioning the pioneering role of geography in the borderology. The relevance of Julian Minghi’s idea that “boundaries are perhaps the most palpable political geographic phenomena” remains<sup>2</sup>.

Yet, the strongest side of border studies is their interdisciplinarity. Borders as such

are studied by the sociologists, philosophers, psychologists, lawyers, anthropologists, economists and other researchers. Borders and border regions are particularly revealing places for social and humanitarian research. Philosophical analysis has become very important for understanding the new processes and events that have begun and developed over the last ten years on the European borders. As a result, the interdisciplinary method and research start to be the only possibility to explain the situation of the “new border normality”.

The term *border* is often used synonymously with the terms *boundary* and *frontier*.

The main differences between these definitions are:

- *Border* means a clear and fixed line both on the map and on the ground. It is a legal line in space separating different states and jurisdictions but not necessarily nations and ethnic groups.
- The term *boundary* arises inside a linear concept of demarcation which divides two states.
- The term *frontier* was often linked with a relatively “empty” territory with no human settlements. Nowadays, the definition of *frontier* is closely linked with such terms as *cross-border territory*.

Europe is characterized by a reduction of the number of state’s borders that has been going on since 1989. Central and Eastern European countries are now framed by approximately 8,000 miles of new state’s lines Michel Foucher points out that “the so-called old continent is the newest of all,

1 Paasi, A. Review on Dijink, G and Knippenberg H.(eds.) Territorial Factor: Political Geography in a Globalizing World. *Journal of Economic and Social Geography*, Vol. 93, No. 4, 2002, p.476, 481.  
2 Minghi, J. Boundary Studies in Political Geography, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* (1963), Vol. 53, No. 3, 1963, p.407.

with more than 60% of its present borders drawn during the twentieth century”<sup>3</sup>.

In the middle of the 1990s, Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson proposed that “borders no longer function as they once did, or at least not in every respect... and globalization of culture, the internationalization of economics and politics have apparently resulted in the opening up of borders and the relaxation of those state controls which limited the movement of people, goods, capital and ideas”<sup>4</sup>. Later they add: “the extent and the depth of these border transformations, which seem to fly in the face of numerous examples of international borders which have been made stronger and more impenetrable”. Today borders are seen by them as “process” as much as “product”, and the modern state is perceived as “incomplete” and “fragmented”<sup>5</sup>.

Globalization has, however, had its effect: the contemporary borders appear to be more differentiated, and their meaning is changing. With the increase of the European integration, the nature of borders has altered: the functions of boundaries and borders are rapidly transforming, “creating a situation that demands careful analysis, considering boundaries and cross-boundary interactions at different levels... as a single

system”<sup>6</sup>. Ten years ago the situation, complemented by the quickly developing process of migration to Europe, changed and modified these tendencies. Over the last three years, many EU member states have quickly come to strengthening their own state borders inside the European Union. Evidently, the above-mentioned tendencies are still relevant today, but the “bridge” function of the border does not find its reflection in the common political and emotional atmosphere in the European Union. Such notions as “wall” and “lock” are more applicable to the current state of European borders. In this situation the meaning of borders has to be reframed and rediscovered.

### Space, territory, territoriality

Imaginary patterns of space, such as core, semi-periphery and periphery, center-periphery, have been significant in developing the boundaries of countries and have attempted to forecast the approaching relation between local and global borders. The territory as an analytic category inscribes membership and identity in physical space. Nevertheless, borders are an element in the transforming dimensions of space. Territory, or territoriality, has become an increasingly prevalent notion in the discourse of the EU.

We note three tendencies as the dialectical process of the borders: *territorialization*, *re-territorialization* and *de-territorialization*. Two of them appear to oppose each other, while being reciprocal processes in

3 Foucher, M. 1998. The geopolitics of European frontiers. *The frontiers of Europe*. Edited by M. Anderson and E. Bort. London: Continuum, p. 235.

4 Donnan, H. and Wilson, Th. M. 1999. *Borders: Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State*. New York, Oxford: Berg Publishers, p.3.

5 Donnan, H. and Wilson, Th. M. 2012. *Borders and Border Studies. A Companion to Border Studies*. Edited by Donnan, Hastings and Wilson, Thomas M. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, p. 9.

6 Kolossov, V. 2005. Geopolitics Theorizing Borders. *Border Studies: Changing Perspectives and Theoretical Approaches. Geopolitics*, Vol.10, 2005, p. 628.

the European territory: the disappearance and strengthening of borders happens simultaneously. Deleuze and Guattari speak about the two general tendencies: “territorialization” and “deterritorialization”, which are very important for the philosophical analysis of the meaning of borders. Territorialization mostly means differentiation of space and construction of borders. Deterritorialization is described as eradication of social, political, or cultural practices from their native places and populations. The result of this process is weakening of ties between ethnic, religious belonging, culture and territory. At the same time, both deterritorialization and territorialization are processes which are going on and developing not only on the physical, but also on the psychological territory, which designates the status of a relationship between groups or individuals. Felix Guattari divides the processes of deterritorialization into “relative” and “absolute”. To him, the relative deterritorialization constitutes a possibility of re-territorialization or returning to the past situation. The absolute deterritorialization is marked by an impossibility of being re-territorialized again. Deterritorialization tends to be followed by re-territorialization<sup>7</sup>.

Human history never had pure and only tendency in the territorial and borders’ spheres. At the end of the 1990s, the tendency to understand borders and boundaries only as a symbol of “past and fixed world” in which territory was the most important dimension, begins to become less popular. In Europe the process of re-territorialization

partially starts in the period after 1989. The new stage of the re-territorialization process, which started to be visible less than a decade ago, also shows that “this changing shape of governance” does not adequately manage such rapidly and unpredictably changing processes of borders. These changing processes of borders have their own general features. Étienne Balibar indicates some of them: the borders are no longer entirely situated at the outer limit of territories, they are somewhat dispersed in all directions; Europe is always home to tensions among numerous religious, cultural and linguistic identities as well as multiple readings of history. Balibar concluded that borders and territories are not a symbol of “past and fixed world” and they start to be a “transitional object”, an object of permanent transgression. The new image of territorial transgression was realized and started to be obvious in the second decade of the XXI century. It can be stated that after some decades of European deterritorialization, we have observed such tendency as re-territorialization. Balibar develops his metaphor that “Europe is a frontier” and creates the idea of “European citizenship as citizenship of borders” in a metaphoric sense<sup>8</sup>.

### European Migration Crisis and Deconstructing the Border Theory

The current debate in border studies shows that the dominant voice starts to be now

7 Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1994). *What is Philosophy?* Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 110.

8 Balibar, Étienne. “*Europe as Borderland*”, The Alexander von Humboldt Lecture in Human Geography. 2004. Available from Internet: <http://www.ru.nl/socgeo/colloquium/Europe%20as%20Borderland.pdf>

more radical, postmodern and critical. At the moment, the critical voices of politicalology, philosophy, law and international affairs representatives try to explain the “European migration crisis” in another, more specific way. Most of them interpret the current border situation as a crisis of humanitarian critique on border and migration studies (Nicholas De Genova, Nick Vaughan-Williams, Serhat Karakayali and Enrica Rigo)<sup>9</sup>. Drawing on “European migration crisis” as “a new normality” they found situation in which traditional borderology sometime has no answer to the question: should or not biopolitical border security practice always result in death or/and dehumanization? Using post-structuralist approach, they found critical resources for rethinking new context of the relationship between borders, refugees and practice. The re-thinking of Agamben, Derrida, Esposito and Foucault key ideas, gave them the explanation of the process of dehumanization and animalization of migrants in detention camps. Drawing on biopolitical paradigms in contemporary political philosophy, they try to find keys for interpreting current dynamics within immigration policies and its antinomy consequences. The problem of humanitarianism and biopolitical border

security in Europe was discussed by Vaughan-Williams in his article “We are not animals! Humanitarian border security and zoopolitical spaces in Europe”<sup>10</sup>. The article is about developing alternative border imaginaries opposite to the complexities of bordering practices in global politics. This article can be divided in two parts: the first part talks about the contemporary border security reality, and the second part represents a theoretic elaboration of the post-biopolitical paradigm. Vaughan-Williams distinguishes critical scholars from the radical ones, who investigate and write about borders. Critical scholars have sought to move beyond debates about the continued importance or likely obsolescence of state borders under conditions of globalization by tracing the changing nature and location of European borders. In fact, Vaughan-Williams focuses on how the zoopolitical logic identified by Derrida governs the application of human rights. In his view, the neoliberalisation of border security and migration management along with the emphasis on the well-being of “irregular” populations are closely associated with what Michel Foucault paradigmatically referred to as “biopolitics”.

Theoretical understanding of the mass phenomenon of refugees is important, because they are a subject of persecution, displacement, loss and suffering. Nowadays, an anthropocentric frame of understanding biopower includes such terminology as “man-as-species”, “anthropological machine”, the figure of “Homo Sacer”,

9 De Genova, N. 2011. Alien powers: deportable labour and the spectacle of security, in Vicki Squire, *The Contested Politics of Mobility: Borderzones and Irregularity*, London: Routledge, 91 – 115; Karakayali, S. and Rigo, E. 2010. “Mapping the European space of circulation”. In *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement*, Edited by: de Genova, Nicholas and Peutz, Nathalie. 123–44. Durham: Duke University Press; Vaughan-Williams, N. 2015. *Europe's Border Crisis: Biopolitical Security and Beyond*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

10 Vaughan-Williams, N. “We are not animals! Humanitarian border security and zoopolitical spaces in Europe”. *Political Geography*, 2015, Vol. 45, p. 1–10.

“zoopolitical border”. At the same time, “irregular” populations at the border account for all characteristics closely associated with Michel Foucault’s biopolitical discourse and with the concept of sovereign power which means “the right to take life or let live”<sup>11</sup>. The appeal to Derrida lectures published posthumously “The Beast and the Sovereign” in which he developed the notion of the ‘zoopolitical border’, helps for deeper understanding of the migration crisis on European borders<sup>12</sup>. By emphasizing the performative production of a zoopolitical place (detention centers), Derrida expresses the necessity to develop alternative border imaginaries opposite to the complexities of bordering practices in global politics.

Today the EU member states are facing a number of genuine challenges in multiple aspects: practical, moral, juridical, social and security management. Among the most significant challenges are the following:

- The diversity of people moving presents an incredibly complex and demanding situation.
- For such frontline countries as Italy, Greece, Croatia and Hungary and their particularly weak economies this situation is very hard both economically and socially, and it causes internal stress.

11 Foucault M. 2003. Lecture 11, 17 March 1976, in *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France*. Picador Press. p. 241.

12 Derrida, J. 2008. *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. Edited by Marie-Louise Mallet, translated by David Wills. New York: Fordham University Press; Derrida, J. 2009. *The Beast and the Sovereign*, Vol.1 and 2. Edited by Michel Lisse, Marie-Louise Mallet and Ginette Michaud, Translated by Geoffrey Bennington. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Identifying those in need of international protection is difficult (the refugee status of people fleeing Syria or other conflicts is more clear-cut). Those in need of international protection may not fit within the legal definition of a refugee.
- For many of these people the line between the pull and push factors of international migration is increasingly blurred: their migration is driven by an array of overlapping push factors relating to chronic poverty, inequality, environmental degradation and the effects of climate change. The economic and educational opportunities are an additional pull factor for immigration.
- The financial costs of integration are very high and depend on the time of provision of adequate integration support. The earlier the refugees receive it, the quicker they can become self-sufficient, gain employment and contribute taxes.

The listed challenges are only some of the serious problems which lie ahead of Europe.

As Jorgen Carling notices, notwithstanding specific legal protections for refugees, the current use of simplistic categories of “forced” and “voluntary” migration risks creates a two-tiered system of protection and assistance in which the rights and needs of those not qualifying as “refugees” under the legal definition are effectively disregarded<sup>13</sup>. Populations with refugee statuses are among

13 Carling, J. *The role of Aspirations in Migration*. Paper presented at Determinants of International Migration, International Migration Institute, University of Oxford, 23–25 September 2014.

the most affected by push factors in a country or region as these populations are faced with genocide-like conditions in their country of origin. Pull factors, on the other hand, are often beneficial elements of a new country that encourages people to immigrate there in order to seek a better life. The next challenge is economical; there is a substantial financial cost for countries receiving large-scale influxes of refugees and others granted international protection in terms of integration support. Given the slow economic recovery in many EU states, this is not a cost that all are willing to bear. Another question is how long refugees will remain in Europe, and thus how long they will need such support. Certainly, global trends suggest that many arrivals may have to remain for years.

At the same time, the push-pull model is inadequate to explain the complexities of migration as a phenomenon embedded in broader socio-economic and political processes<sup>14</sup>. In an attempt to move beyond such dualistic view of reasons for migrating, researchers suggested a continuum between proactive (voluntary) and reactive (involuntary) migration, where most migration decisions would be the result of both volition and constriction<sup>15</sup>. *A theory of migration*,

which was offered by Everett S. Lee in 1961, has become a classic explanation of migration factors which divides them into three categories: factors associated with the area of origin, factors associated with the area of destination, intervening obstacles and personal factors. For him, “no matter how short or how long, how easy or how difficult, every act of migration involves an origin, a destination, and an intervening set of obstacles. Among the set of intervening obstacles, we include the distance of the move as one that is always present”<sup>16</sup>. Lee observed some consistent patterns through which the volume of migration which connected with the diversity of people: “where there is a great sameness among people-whether in terms of race or ethnic origin, of education, of income, or tradition-we may expect a lesser rate of migration than where there is great diversity of people”<sup>17</sup>. He anticipated an increase in the volume of migration: both in the diversity of areas and in the diversity of people. His common observations that migrants proceed along well-defined routes toward highly specific destinations are also clearly visible and relevant today.

Today most researchers agree that actual violent events in the native home and a lack of security are the central determinants which forced populations to move.

They have found that, in concurrence with rational choice theory, people evaluate the magnitude of the threat they are

14 De Haas, H. Vezzoli, S. and Natter, K. Conceptualizing and measuring migration policy change. *Comparative Migration Studies*. 2015, Vol. 3, No 15, p.1-21. file:///C:/Users/B/Downloads/Conceptualizing%20and%20measuring%20migration%20policy%20change.pdf  
De Haas, H. and Fokkema T. Pre- and Post-Migration Determinants of Socio-Cultural Integration of African Immigrants in Italy and Spain. *International Migration*, 2015, Vol. 53, No 6, 3-26. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2011.00687.x/full>

15 Betts, Alexander. 2013. *Survival migration: Failed governance and the crisis of displacement*. New York: Cornell University Press.

16 Lee, Everett. A theory of migration. *Demography*, 1966, Vol.3, No 1, 47-57, p. 49. [http://demografi.bps.go.id/phpFileTree/bahan/kumpulan\\_tugas\\_mobilias\\_pak\\_chotib/Kelompok\\_7/Everett\\_S\\_Lee\\_A\\_Theory\\_of\\_Migration.pdf](http://demografi.bps.go.id/phpFileTree/bahan/kumpulan_tugas_mobilias_pak_chotib/Kelompok_7/Everett_S_Lee_A_Theory_of_Migration.pdf)

17 Ibid, p.52.



facing: the greater the threat, the higher the number of people who decide to migrate.

### Deconstructing border theory through new materialist approach

Today the new materialist approach is most important for researchers who have a goal to deconstruct border theory and to find an alternative way of thinking. Ewa Domanska notes

that “the very definition of a thing is problematic. In dictionaries a thing is defined as an entity having material existence; the real and concrete substance of an entity; an entity existing in time and space; an inanimate object. The word object is used as a synonym (“object” is defined as a “material thing”; a “tangible and visible entity that can cast a shadow”)<sup>18</sup>. According to her, the human and social sciences have implemented major changes in the past decade, thanks to the critique of humanism, anthropocentrism and Eurocentrism. New materialism developed new connections with humanities and sciences, thus bringing materiality back to its significant place in the border studies. This shift is prefigured by the development of migration, the ecological crisis, and terrorism.

New materialism “rewrites thinking as a whole, leaving nothing untouched, redirecting every possible idea according to its new sense of orientation”<sup>19</sup>. It represents a new

type of metaphysics. Being an attempt to “jump” into the future without an adequate preparation in the present, it becomes the new unknown future. In this sense, the new materialist explanation concerning relationship between linear and nonlinear time is very helpful for nowadays borders’ interpretation. Border and borderland are a place, space or territory where “past” and “future” are permanently clashed. The “past” was never simply there to begin with, and the “future” is not what will unfold, but “past” and “future” are iteratively reconfigured and enfolded through the world’s ongoing intra-activity. History suggests that borders and borderlands are the territory where a possibility to “repair” the “now” situation exists.

Another important new materialist notion is *diffraction*. Van der Tuin explains that “*diffraction* is meant to disrupt linear and fixed causalities, and to work toward “more promising interference patterns”<sup>20</sup>. The ongoing European refugee crisis is an example of *diffraction* which in reality not only is a concentration of current wars and conflicts, but also represents the neo-colonialist past in general.

The article “New Materialisms, Discourse Analysis and International Relations: A Radical Inter-Textual Approach” starts with the question: “Does the New Materialisms literature offer a satisfactory response to the limits of prior conceptions of discourse or is there a need to find other critical resources opposite to this task?”<sup>21</sup>.

18 Domanska, Ewa. Return to Things. *Archaeologia Polona*, 2006, vol. 44, 172.

19 *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies*, edited by Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin. 2012. Open Humanities Press. An imprint of Michigan Publishing, p. 13.

20 van der Tuin, I. A Different Starting Point, a Different Metaphysics”: Reading Bergson and Barad Diffractively. *Hypatia*. 2011.26.01, p. 26.

21 Vaughan-Williams, N. and Lundborg, T. New Materialisms, Discourse Analysis, and International

In the authors' answer to this question the following conclusions can be distinguished:

- new materialism constitutes a major ontological project, which not only questions the prevalent linguistic bias,
- it calls for a re-evaluation of the anthropocentrism,
- it pushes the limits of the current debate; this extended perspective on discourse ultimately assigns equal weight to linguistic and material dimensions.

Jane Bennett argues that traditional approaches to politics rely on a problematic, anthropocentric, and “therefore highly political distinction between the supposedly dull life of things on the one hand versus the vibrant life of humans on the other hand”<sup>22</sup>. She sees “political ecology” as a power of things in themselves to be *a thing-power*. According to her, “vitality” refers to the capacity of things – edibles, commodities, storms, metals – not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans”<sup>23</sup>. In the “The Force of Things” Bennett writes that “things are always already humanized objects”<sup>24</sup>. She invites to articulate “ways in which human being and thinghood overlap each other”<sup>25</sup>. The absence of things' capacity such as food, home, water are *push factors* that can drive people to leave their homes. They are forceful and relate to the country from which a person migrates.

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Relations: A Radical Intertextual Approach. *Review of International Studies*, 2015, 41(1) (January), 3-25.

22 Bennett, J. 2010. *Vibrant Matter*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, p. viii.

23 Ibidem.

24 Bennett, Jane. The Force of Things: Steps Towards an Ecology of Matter, *Political Theory*. 2004, 32:3, p.354.

25 Ibid, p.349.

## Conclusion

Philosophical analysis has become very important for understanding the new processes and events which have been occurring and developing on European borders over the last ten years. The interdisciplinary method starts to be the only method that offers a possibility to explain the border situation in the conditions of growing globalization and migration crisis of the present era.

The ongoing biggest European refugee crisis is an example of a kind of diffraction which in reality not only is a concentration of current wars and conflicts, but also represents the long history of injustice, thus it should be analyzed through the neo-colonialist paradigm. The new materialist approach to the relationship between linear and nonlinear time is very helpful for the modern interpretation of borders. On the border there is no inherently determinate relationship between past, present, and future. European borders are a territory where “past”, “now” and “future” are permanently clashed.

The epistemological approach is a method that provides a possibility to find historical parallels and similarities with the modern European border crises. The current refugee crisis in Europe and the situation on the borders constitute a crisis of agent and agency. Today European states look like deficient instances of agency with no need to conceptualize this agency for the reason of the agent's absence. The new materialist approach will provide a possibility to analyze and explain the new tendency of European identity deconstruction in the conditions of migration crisis.

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