

CROSSING EUROPEAN BOUNDARIES

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CROSSING EUROPEAN BOUNDARIES



Beyond Conventional Geographical Categories

Edited by
Jaro Stacul, Christina Moutsou and Helen Kopnina



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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The present volume brings together recent ethnographic studies on Europe at the turn of the millennium. It addresses a variety of theoretical issues that have become relevant in anthropology as the boundaries of Europe are being redrawn. Like many other academic works, it was conceived outside the ‘ivory towers’ of academia: the idea of an edited book on Europe was originally developed in the course of a meeting within the informal context of a cafeteria in King’s Cross Station, in London. The book subsequently grew out of a workshop entitled *Crossing European Boundaries. Beyond Conventional Geographical Categories*, held in Cracow at the 6th Biennial Conference of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) in July 2000. The aim of the workshop was a discussion of the meanings attached to the idea of ‘crossing European boundaries’ in a post-national era in various social contexts, and of the contradictions with which this idea is replete. We are very grateful to the colleagues who enthusiastically contributed to the debates, especially to those who participated in the workshop.

We would like to thank the granting bodies whose financial support made the organisation of the workshop possible; particularly the EASA, which assisted with EU funding. A debt of gratitude is owed to the Department of Social Anthropology of the University of Cambridge both for its financial support, and for providing desk space and the infrastructure that enhanced the completion and production of this book. In Cambridge our thanks are also due to the Computing Centre of Cambridge University for technical support. Helen Kopnina wishes to thank King’s College, Cambridge, for funding, and Christina Moutsou and Jaro Stacul express their gratitude to the British Academy for awarding Overseas Conference Grants. Finally, we are deeply grateful to an anonymous reader whose comments and constructive

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Helen Kopnina, Christina Moutsou and Jaro Stacul
London, December 2004

CHAPTER 1

CROSSING EUROPEAN BOUNDARIES: BEYOND CONVENTIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL CATEGORIES

Jaro Stacul, Christina Moutsou and Helen Kopnina



A ‘New Europe’?

If anthropology represents an ‘uncomfortable discipline’, as Firth (1981: 200) phrased it over twenty years ago, perhaps there are grounds for suggesting that Europe has played the role of the ‘problematic subject’ within the ‘uncomfortable discipline’. As an area of anthropological research, it is not as ‘exotic’ as the locales most anthropologists prefer, and its appearance in the canons of major ethnographic sites has been relatively slow. As Parman (1998: 2) wrote, Europe has been deployed ‘as a conceptual construct, as a vehicle of Occidentalism, to define and enforce the boundaries and hierarchical inequalities of Occident and Orient’, and served as a testing ground for the distinguishing features of the discipline. ‘The role of Europe in the anthropological imagination has been complex, sometimes paradoxical, often provocative’ (Parman 1998: 3). Despite its slow appearance in the discipline, now it is agreed that the anthropology of Europe can challenge hierarchies of representation previously taken for granted.

These days, writing about Europe from an anthropological viewpoint is far from being an easy task, for Europe can no longer be studied in its own terms. September 11th and the terrorist threat were not confined to one area of the world, but had considerable impact in Europe. Moreover, the addition of ten

member-states to the European Union (EU), which occurred on 1 May 2004, has yet to reveal new political dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. New alliances are being formed, new disparaging lines are being drawn between nations, and new legal mechanisms and policies come into place. While the idea of the bounded nature of the nation-state used to rest on the assumption that it is a territorial entity with its own borders encompassing a national 'culture', nowadays Europe presents us with some new and unexplored issues: it represents an entity in which borders are removed as a result of the neo-liberal idea of the single market, and where certain categorical distinctions (West/East, North/South, Left/Right) that have so far been taken for granted are subsequently blurred. By contrast, some national borders have become increasingly important and sometimes conflict with or take over identities created by other, non-national boundaries. The development of communications has meant that Europe is becoming increasingly interconnected with the political as well as ideological sentiments elsewhere, be it in the Middle East, the United States, or the Far East. A sense of Europeanness becomes problematised, challenged and recreated as new boundaries are being redrawn or eliminated. The Cold War partition of Europe for example provided Western Europe with a supposedly solid base-line for its project of regional integration. Yet in the absence of such a negative yard-stick, imposed from outside, the boundaries of Europe become unclear, and so does the definition of a common cultural space that people would willingly adopt as their collective frame of reference.

Since its inception, the anthropology of Europe has been faced with the shifting role of its object of analysis, which is a consequence both of the political changes from the aftermath of the Second World War onwards, and of the theoretical shifts in the discipline that ensued. We will not go into all the details of anthropological studies of Europe in the last fifty years. Suffice it to say, for the purposes of our debate, that at its inception the main theoretical issue of a Europeanist anthropology was that of modernisation: national governments and international organisations were encountering various problems in implementing strategies for development (Goddard *et al.* 1994: 2), and anthropologists were well equipped to provide answers and spot the roots of some of these problems. It is in this context that a tradition of studies of peasantries flourished: the Mediterranean became the preferred geographical area for testing theories and formulating hypotheses, and the 'community' acted as the central unit of investigation.

The crisis of structural-functionalism in the 1960s–1970s, the political unrest that characterised that period and the emergence of Marxism in anthropological theory entailed a shift in theoretical focus: studies of rural communities became less popular and anthropologists paid increasing attention to the interrelationship between the local and the national, most notably to macro social processes of state formation and bureaucratisation, even though

they continued to focus on the Mediterranean area. In the 1980s, by contrast, the theoretical framework around which most of Europeanist anthropology was built (i.e. that associated with 'positivism') came under attack from the post-modernist approach, which gave primacy to deconstruction, textuality and the politics of identity (Goddard *et al.* 1994: 19). It is within such a context that anthropology started focusing on European identities rather than on 'communities' (see e.g. Macdonald 1993) and, more recently, on European integration and its paradoxes (see e.g. Bellier and Wilson 2000; Holmes 2000; Shore 2000).

Although this brief summary does not do justice to the development of a Europeanist anthropology and its complexities, it seems safe to suggest that there is a common thread, a pathway running through this body of studies: this is a progressive expansion of scale, from what used to be considered social realities with clear-cut boundaries to entities in which boundaries decline in significance or are redefined. It is against this changing background that the anthropology of present-day Europe should be located. At the turn of the millennium, Europe becomes a pervasive concept. This is suggested not only by the rhetoric of politicians who place considerable emphasis on the necessity to be part of it, but also by the fact that it is appealed to by various regionalist movements which are no longer particularistic in character, but make competing claims to 'Europeanness'. The expansion of the EU is a case in point, as already noted. Likewise countries previously labelled as 'outside Europe' are in the process of rewriting their national history. For some of these countries rewriting history means establishing a relationship with Europe, that is to say claiming a European history. Yet establishing such a relationship is also a political act, for it entails crossing a boundary.

Anthropological Dilemmas

The significance that the idea of 'crossing' recently acquired in Europeanist anthropology is the outcome of a progressive expansion of scale that goes hand in hand with major theoretical shifts in focus aimed at transcending rigid categorisations. The articles in this book are intended to argue the theoretical significance of the expansion of scale in anthropological studies of Europe. They set out to explore the variety of (often contrasting) meanings associated with the act of 'crossing European boundaries' by looking at locales as diverse as Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom. What unites most of them is a focus on a paradox inherent in the act of 'crossing European boundaries': if one of the ideas that the current concept of 'Europe' conveys is removal of boundaries, it also involves ways of establishing new ones.

Somehow crossing boundaries forms an integral part of the anthropological project. Traditionally, an anthropologist crosses the boundary of his or her

own culture by entering the 'field', although some may argue that a subtle cultural boundary remains. Nowadays the societies anthropologists study are no longer perceived as bounded but rather as open and constantly changing; alongside boundaries, previously reified notions such as identity, ethnicity, class and community are undergoing a process of redefinition. What reflecting on the anthropology of Europe brings to the fore is the question of whether anthropology has really changed or has only moved in theory, developing its own debates but not our understanding of the world it presumes to study. To answer this question, we need to ask ourselves where anthropology stands in the contemporary world. To follow Geertz, anthropology is what its practitioners do, so the answer to our question depends on anthropological practices. Anthropology at the beginning of the millennium attempts to adjust itself to a rapidly changing world, not only to defend itself against attacks from other academic disciplines (initiated in part by competition for funding) but also to regain confidence and passion for its own chosen subject. Thus, anthropology's task is a process of continuous accumulation, updating the previously studied data and entering new areas, both theoretical and geographical.

Anthropology has been blamed for indulging in a kind of 'Orientalism', simultaneously exoticising and distancing its subjects. Throughout the twentieth century, Social Anthropology came to be known as the study of non-Western societies. Just like the skull-measuring treasure hunters entering the land of 'savages', anthropologists were blamed for looking at their subjects as the 'other', observing and recording odd cultural antiques and colourful rituals. The 'natives' were often presented against pristine settings devoid of all-too-visible signs of Westernisation. Western influence itself, mostly felt through economic and industrial imports, was often described as intrusive and alien to the 'native' culture. It was not until the early 1970s that a systematic study of the supposedly homogeneous Western culture started to appear in anthropological writing. But once the West was 'discovered' by anthropologists the technique of describing 'tribes' or 'urban minorities' presented curiosities similar to aboriginal skulls and poisoned spearheads. Recent work in anthropology attempts to bring the subject to the fore, to see the 'native' and his 'culture' as an actor on a global stage, starring in a local performance (Johnston *et al.* 2002). As anthropologists notice the plight of impoverished farmers in remote Altain villages, or follow the truckloads of refugees smuggled into Scandinavian ports, or observe the Londoner's easy stroll, our view of Europe expands. We no longer see the 'villages' of the 'other', but we observe modern life in all its human complexity, and we record living history in the context of larger temporal and spatial processes.

Anthropology has been based on ethnographic research and theoretical models as a means of exploring its subject. The British anthropological school has consistently favoured fieldwork as the distinguished method of anthropological research. However, there has been a persistent dilemma within the

history of anthropology as to how to integrate theory with practice. The often-observed split between the two has been applied to the anthropology of Europe. There has been a general agreement between anthropologists studying Europe that we need to go beyond strict functional and/or structural models in order to understand current European society. A response to this realisation was the rise of postmodern anthropology, which was an attempt to deconstruct pre-existing anthropological categories, taking a literary and philosophical turn. The problem remained, however, of how to write anthropology in a flexible way so as to reflect complex social processes and offer an in-depth understanding of specific social phenomena.

Conceptualising Complexity in Europe

There is an increased social and geographical mobility within Europe with which anthropological writing has to come to terms, which goes hand in hand with the dissolution (or remaking) of other boundaries that were central to the definition of social groups. If anthropologists' concern with European identities largely reflects the significance of boundaries in the discipline, the removal of boundaries within the continent makes Europe a privileged context for the observation of the effects of a process that is occurring across the globe: it represents the site of a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order, to follow Appadurai (1990: 296). Once the cradle of nationalism, which conveys ideas of divisions, much of Western Europe now represents a political and territorial entity in which frontiers can be crossed freely without going through checkpoints. Although it would be contentious to postulate that a European identity has the potential to replace national and regional identities, it seems clear that concepts such as 'nation', 'region', 'locality' as well as ethnicity, identity, class and community (to name a few) have now to be redefined in relation to this expanding entity.

The idea of 'crossing boundaries' nicely describes this process of expansion: it is the product of an epoch, and comes to the fore at a time when national boundaries are materially removed and deconstructed in anthropological theory. Nowadays this idea is central to the definition of 'Europe': the act of crossing boundaries, by its very nature, conveys ideas of mobility and, to a certain extent, of placelessness too. As Jacques Delors once said, mobility and cooperation are at the heart of the European ethos (Barry 1993: 314): objects, people and knowledge move across boundaries with a speed and frequency that was unimaginable until a few years ago. Technological change, information production, standardisation and regulation are all notions around which the European Union, as a technologically regulatory State, is built and continues to develop, and the reduction of spatial barriers is an important means to augment social power (Harvey 1989: 232–3).

The idea of 'crossing European boundaries' encapsulates the increasing importance of economic and cultural mobility within the continent (Barry 1993: 317). It expresses a novel reading of European space through which territorial space no longer has the same significance to the activities and organisation of the state. Given this situation of flux and movement, the process of Europeanisation begs various questions. It may be asked, for example, whether it will eventually bring about a significant levelling between eastern and western Europe or a more homogeneous and cohesive whole, as Goddard, Llobera and Shore (1994: 24) suggested. Yet while the association of Europe with mobility and the act of crossing boundaries is largely an expression of the neo-liberal discourse of the single market, as discussed, the meanings attached to it remain largely unexplored. If this idea were taken at face value, we would be led to assume that social actors across the continent are passive recipients of it, and would overlook the fact that crossing European boundaries may mean different things to different people. For those at the centres of EU decision-making, the act of crossing may be tantamount to cosmopolitanism, just as for others it may entail establishing a relationship with a 'European' culture in order to stress distinctiveness.

In this book we seek to distance ourselves from the 'top down' perspective, which has informed many recent anthropological studies on Europeanisation (see e.g. Borneman and Fowler 1997; Bellier and Wilson 2000; Shore 2000; Shore and Abélès 2004). Instead, we take on board the idea that by bringing human agency back into Europe we can make sense of the multiple and often contrasting ideas that the act of 'crossing European boundaries' conveys and assess this act's pervasiveness. The focus on human agency raises various issues. These include the associations individuals make between themselves and an entity in which boundaries can be crossed; how this idea is accommodated to local-level discourses (both in the City of London and in a 'remote' mountain village); how it is received and understood; how far a European identity can coexist with national, regional and local identities; and (last but not least) whether the act of 'crossing European boundaries' represents an accommodation to the power structures that permeate this act or a way of resisting power itself.

A reconsideration of the role of social actors in making sense of the world they live in may seem at odds with recent trends in the discipline, most notably with a tendency to concentrate more on institutions and legal texts than on actor-centred research. This interest in officialdom stems both from the emergence and consolidation of supra-national institutions like the EU, and from the idea, borrowed from Foucault, that power relations permeate all levels of society. This emphasis on power relations has involved increasing attention to the processes and techniques whereby institutions and national and supra-national agencies govern and discipline populations (Ferguson and Gupta 2002). In this regard, Europe is no exception. Complexity in Europe,

for instance, has been conceptualised by focusing on large socio-economic and political processes or by paying attention to the shifting boundaries of what had been viewed as bounded communities. Many authors have pointed to the significance of the ideas introduced by the EU to the lives of individuals, but there are not many detailed ethnographic accounts of what it means to social actors to live as 'Europeans' in a particular context.

McDonald's work on the European Commission (1996) forms part of the latter intellectual tradition. In her analysis of the concept of 'unity in diversity' she highlights that the philosophy behind the establishment of the EU is one that juxtaposes itself to the idea of fixed borders linked to nationalism and the nation-state, and seeks to create a 'new Europe' with permeable boundaries. McDonald argues that such a philosophy seems to claim that defeating nationalism makes us better human beings. She also points out that as a result of that, it has become difficult to talk about Europe without automatically referring to the EU. McDonald's paper was published at the same time as other anthropological studies on globalisation and the city (see e.g. Hannerz 1996, Howes 1996, Westwood and Williams 1997). These and other studies confirm that the history of the EU's establishment, putting aside the financial and political reasons behind it, seems to parallel a global sense of the world having become smaller, and regional borders being more frequently transcended. However, McDonald's argument focuses on the social actors and points out the limitations and inaccuracies of conceptualising recent political and social changes as a process separate from everyday life experience.

This volume follows McDonald's example in that it sets out to argue that the question of the EU's placement within Europe and its handling of the concept of Europe does not necessarily need to be viewed from a top-down perspective (see also McDonald 2004). In other words, what seems to be lacking in recent anthropological studies on Europe is a reflection on human agency and social actors. People do not simply enact culture but interpret it in their own ways and through their own cultural categories, and they adapt to a situation of rapid change and flow in ways which are often at odds with the politics of European integration. Like transnationalism, European integration does not simply involve the movements of capital, people and goods, but 'is also made and unmade in the dynamics of intimate spaces and moments of everyday life' (Raj 2003: 20). In this respect, Europeaness may be reinterpreted in the context of everyday life, as Moutsou's chapter (this volume) suggests in relation to Greek and Turkish immigrants in Brussels. Although relations between places are continually shifting as a consequence of the political and economic reorganisation of space in the world system, these shifts can hardly be made sense of unless we acknowledge the fact that social actors make their own space to come to terms with this reorganisation, and are not passive spectators in the face of global processes.

European Boundaries at Issue

An interest in European boundaries and emphasis on human agency may seem mutually exclusive. After all, the association of Europe with boundaries usually evokes the image of the national border, which conjures up ideas of power. Borders, by their very nature, exist as physical, 'official' realities: they usually convey the idea of a checkpoint one has to go through when leaving one country and entering another. They embody the idea of the State as 'above' citizens (Ferguson and Gupta 2002: 982), and constitute techniques for disciplining and limiting the movement of citizens themselves. There is a vast body of anthropological literature on borders (for details see Donnan and Wilson 1999), which has thoroughly covered the ground on their significance in the discipline, and it is outside the scope of this book to add more material to the existing debate. Suffice it to say, for the purposes of this work, that the anthropology of borders, like that of institutions (and EU institutions), shares much with anthropological studies of elite cultures and power, where researchers try to 'study up' (Bellier and Wilson 2000: 6; Shore and Nugent 2002; see also Nader 1974; Wolf 1974).

Yet even the anthropology of borderlands is not just about State borders, but also about the conceptual, metaphorical boundaries involved (Alvarez 1995: 448). Kelleher's contribution (this volume) makes this point very clearly. Borders are a form of boundaries, but boundaries are not necessarily borders, and they are not only material. While Europe represents the context within which national borders decline in significance, it is also the site in which various other kinds of boundaries become blurred. As already noted, the title *Crossing European Boundaries* is intended as a reflection on the relationship (or tension) between the act of crossing frontiers, as an expression of the neo-liberal ideology of the single market, and the blurring and remaking of other boundaries that is the result of (or goes hand in hand with) this act. This tension is clear, for example, in Però's examination of the Left/Right dichotomy in Italy (this volume), and in the analysis of the redefinition of the boundary between the 'local' and the 'European' in Stacul's chapter on the Italian Alps (this volume).

Boundaries (mainly the social boundaries that inform social relations) have been the subject of a vast body of anthropological literature for a long time. As Donnan and Wilson (1999: 21) have observed, the history of British Social Anthropology and American Cultural Anthropology is characterised by a shift from an interest in what a boundary encompasses to an interest in the boundary itself. The boundary is an element that embodies a sense of identification with a group of people as well as a sense of distinction vis-à-vis other groups, and is the element marking the beginning and end of a community (Cohen 1985: 12). But whereas boundaries used to be of interest because of the practices and beliefs that they encompassed, in late

modernity they become problematic because of their changing nature, both in the geopolitical space and in anthropological writing. Kopnina's contribution in this volume, for instance, shows that the idea of 'boundary' is central to Russians' self-representation in Amsterdam and London. The problematic nature of boundaries, though, also stems from the fact that the boundedness of culture they evoke has been questioned by recent postmodern theory. In taking on board the idea that in late modernity boundaries are crossed, some scholars have suggested that in anthropological writing boundedness represents a kind of narrative device (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 2) or literary fiction (Clifford 1988: 10). It is a device to map the world as a series of separate, territorialised cultures.

Writing about the act of crossing boundaries does not necessarily mean subscribing to a view of the world as fragmented and boundless. Although it seems clear that boundedness cannot be taken for granted, it must also be noted that the ethnographers' practice of assuming the cultural homogeneity of the people they studied and their boundedness replicated the nationalist consensus that prevailed in their home societies (Grimshaw and Hart 1995: 52), and so it should be looked upon as the product of an epoch in which social and political realities were more 'bounded' than they are nowadays. More importantly, 'boundedness' is not at odds with the state of flux and flexibility (Harvey 1989: 339) that is seen as central to the definition of the condition of postmodernity, and Mannitz clearly makes this point in her chapter on the Turkish community in Berlin (this volume). If anything, 'boundedness' is often the reaction to the situation of instability that flux and flexibility themselves involve.

Thus, stressing the act of 'crossing' does not involve discarding boundedness altogether: while certain boundaries are crossed and do fade, others (sometimes more powerful or of a different nature) come into being or are recreated, even in political discourse. The boundaries focussed on in this work are not necessarily marked in geopolitical space only, but include those elements informing social relations (e.g. class, race and gender, to name just a few) that are redefined as a result of the dissolution of those associated with officialdom. The boundaries represented by gender, race or class or even those of territorial communities appear as permeable and transient as those of European states (see e.g. Waldren's contribution in this volume): what 'crossing European boundaries' involves is a swaying back and forth between dissolution and remaking in the geopolitical space (as Feldman demonstrates in his analysis, in this volume, of Estonia's accession to the EU) as well as in social relations. In Deltso's and Evergeti's contributions on Greece (this volume), for example, it emerges that geographical boundaries are linked to human interaction.

Using the term 'boundaries' instead of 'borders' also has methodological implications. Cohen's (1985) definition of the term illuminates this point:

central to his theory (but see also Barth 1969) is the idea that boundaries are called into being by the exigencies of social interaction, that they play an important role in the definition of a human group, and that they encapsulate its identity. However, he also makes it clear that not all boundaries are objectively apparent: rather, some may exist in the minds of their beholders. The significance of boundaries also lies in their subjective dimension, yet the fact that they may be metaphorical instead of material does not rule out the possibility of their acquiring a political dimension. Fernandez (1997: 726) convincingly makes this point in relation to the North/South dichotomy in Europe: popular cosmologies, he argues, represent category systems that at least potentially contain their own frontiers, which are at odds with a Europe without borders. Europeans do make their own Europe in the way they want, 'but partly in ways that respond to deeper and older geopolitical imaginings'.

Aside from frontiers, even the highly mobile citizens inbred in the European Schools make their own Europe in the way they wish, which can also be very exclusive and barrier-creating in nature. Shore and Baratieri's chapter (this volume) offers such evidence. This idea seems to agree with a recent sociological study on student mobility in Europe (Murphy-Lejeune 2002), which points out that at a time of high European mobility and monetary-union students moving between European countries are still a small minority. According to the author, 'EU citizens are by and large not accustomed to mobility. The right of residence in another member state offered to every European citizen is more an ideal, and European mobility more a dream, than a reality' (Murphy-Lejeune 2002: 51). Mobile students between European countries are almost always strongly encouraged by a social and family background of mixed nationality and/or a history of parents' mobility for career purposes.

The term 'boundaries' is also extensively used in psychology and psychoanalysis to indicate human interaction in relationships. It was introduced in psychoanalytic theory and philosophy more recently than other terms and presupposes an understanding of human beings' interconnectedness. Ego psychology, whose influence is still widely felt, nowadays seems to advocate the individual as a complete and separate entity. As Hacking (1995) demonstrates through his analysis of the false memory syndrome and other contemporary debates about psychological distress, what he calls the 'sciences of memory', i.e. disciplines studying the human mind and emotional states, are deeply embedded in the capitalist culture of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Western society has claimed to be composed of individuals, and, within it, childhood has been turned into a special category and an object of research because of its lack of autonomous function. On the contrary, the use of the concept of boundaries in more recent psychoanalytic studies serves to support the idea of intersubjectivity, a term introduced by Merleau-Ponty

(1962) to make the point that human beings function within relationships in which connectedness needs to be safeguarded and limited by the person's boundaries.

According to Merleau-Ponty, human beings are embedded in relationships since their birth, and these relationships do not only include symbolic and social bonds with significant others, but also what is often perceived as their physical and biological entity. He demonstrates how the body is actually social and our understanding of our very existence comes from relationships and being part of a society. Such an understanding comes in contrast to cognition theory in psychology, which has to a large extent influenced anthropology through structuralism and the study of isolated communities, and which advocates that human and social development takes place within specific developmental stages. Therefore, the more recent understanding of 'boundaries' seems to refer not to individuals, but to human beings within relationships.

The above developments within psychology and in psychoanalytic theory are highly relevant to anthropology's recent attempt to focus on the self and emotionality, as a response and challenge to the understanding of society as a bounded system. Although selfhood is also a potentially controversial term, whose understanding goes beyond the scope of the present project, it seems to entail a more fluid conceptualisation of human beings within society. The concept of self allows for exploration of the complex web of relationships and the continuous dance that characterise human interaction. Thus, a focus on both objective and subjective (or mental) frontiers highlights how the idea of the new Europe and the fading and remaking of geographical boundaries coexist with the shifting of mental boundaries and the redefinition of peoples' individual, social and political identities and social practices.

The Scope of the Volume

If the argument for an anthropology of Europe is straightforward, how to study Europe 'from below' at the turn of the millennium is more problematic. In addressing a variety of theoretical issues, the contributions in this volume seek to provide some answers by examining themes as diverse as education, immigration, ethnicity, local and national identities, and conceptualisations of work, to mention just a few. Despite this variety of themes, what unites them is a common thread, namely, a concern with what crossing boundaries entails, both in terms of physical movement of peoples and at the level of perception. They imply that, despite the recent emphasis on the necessity of studying systems and relations of power that are not always visible, fieldwork remains not only a research tool, but anthropology's distinguished method of comprehending the context and fluidity of social phenomena. In

this respect, it should not be regarded as a means of simply producing or validating theory, but as the essence of anthropological writing. It is often the case that extensive and sensitive ethnographies are more reflective of social complexity than theoretical debates about them. After all, what made anthropology a distinct discipline since its inception was its capacity to reflect on society through the lived experience and simultaneous positional distancing of the researcher.

The first part of the volume deals with the institutional aspect of the act of 'crossing European boundaries'. It focuses on the institutions, agencies and policies designed to foster this act, and on the paradoxes surrounding the accomplishment of this goal. The chapter by Shore and Baratieri, for example, addresses the issue of education by focusing on the role of European Schools, the institutions providing education for the children of EU personnel, and asks whether the European Schools create post-nationalist or non-nationalist citizens of Europe. Education, they note, shapes the cognitive and cultural boundaries of the nation-state in Europe and that of European identity, and European Schools seem to forge the new kind of European subjectivity. History and Geography classes, for example, are designed to disseminate the 'European knowledge' that is missing in the national curricula by implementing a holistic European viewpoint instead of a national one. In this respect, education enables pupils to cross the boundary of their national 'culture', although this does not displace a sense of national identity. Yet the authors argue that while European Schools seem to dissolve the boundaries of national culture, they create others, that is to say class boundaries: because they are exclusive, they will never accommodate a mass public, and only the few who can afford it will have access to European education.

The theme of exclusion is further developed in Feldman's chapter on linguistic and cultural hegemony in the newly created Estonian State. Feldman's chapter adapts the political science perspective to analysis of the role of State institutions, which draw on ideologically potent themes of individual initiative and economic organization to support and explain Government policies. Official discourse on the 'problem' of ethnic integration, in which all non-Estonians are viewed as problematic aliens that need to adapt to Estonian values, is simultaneously cautious of appearing politically incorrect and employs positive metaphors of construction, solidification and growth. However, the author shows that political discourse enacted through integration policy is simultaneously re-enforcing the construction of a non-Estonian 'other' by constructing a category of 'alienated, disenfranchised and threatening' aliens.

The construction of the 'other' through policies is also examined in the following chapter. Però's contribution explores the inadequacies of discourse at a political-ideological level and the recent deconstruction of ideology in Europe. He examines the example of the Left in Italy as a case of significant

discrepancies between ideology and actual social policy. He points to the contradictions surrounding the Left's construction of the question of migration and multiculturalism in contemporary Europe in relation to immigrant housing policy. He argues that the Italian Left is characterised by what he terms an 'non-integrating multiculturalism' – a politics that at the level of discourse favours a recognition of ethno-cultural differences, whereas at the level of practice it opposes the presence of foreign immigrants in ways that in the past would have been ascribed to the Right. By focusing on the impact of housing policies on the lives of social actors (i.e. migrants and refugees), Però highlights ideology as a structure often alienated from social happenings and resistant to change, and shows that the blurring of the Left/Right dichotomy disguises the entanglement of the new Left in the legitimisation of boundaries along ethnic lines.

The second part of the volume develops one of the themes touched upon in the previous part: immigration. Yet instead of looking at institutions and policies, the contributions in this part concentrate on how the act of 'crossing European boundaries' is constructed by those who do the crossing, the social actors themselves. They show that a constructive answer to the frequent confusion created by the so-called 'postmodern anthropology' is to look at the question of individual social actors and their immediate relationships as an effective locus for understanding social phenomena.

This point is implicit in the chapter by Mannitz in relation to the aftermath of German unification that dissolved the boundary between East and West. In her chapter she concentrates on the Turkish community living in former West Berlin, and looks at the consequences that the collapse of the Wall brought about. She observes that while before 1989 Turkish immigrants were cast by the German state as an integral part of the human landscape of the city, with unification they were turned into the 'Other'. The 'Grand Old West', the time before the fall of the Wall, is nostalgically evoked by Turkish youths as a time of social harmony: it symbolises a form of membership that does not entail identification with the current ethno-national concept of Germanness that conveys ideas of exclusion for non-Germans at the same time as it does away with the East/West dichotomy. More importantly, she demonstrates how Turkish youths, symbolic outsiders to the idea of 'Europe', situate themselves as insiders in German society in relation to East Germans. She shows how such a positioning is linked to ideas of globalisation, capitalism and the economy of the West as opposed to ideas of nationalism based on descent and the history of the nation-state.

Fluidity, relationships and subjectivity are themes largely dealt with by the postmodernist movement, which has deeply affected and transformed recent anthropological studies. However, postmodern anthropology has created new problems by focusing on the large-scale and the social power structures, thereby paying considerably less attention to ethnography. In other words,

postmodern anthropology left the discipline and anthropologists powerless by putting a distance between them and the essential means of practising anthropology, i.e. sound and detailed ethnographic research (Bloch 2000). It also initiated a constant questioning of the validity of social research findings in respect of the anthropologists' authority to represent their subjects. Fieldwork though, constitutes a very effective means of understanding change, fluidity and the role of subjective processes by placing one self in midst of social happenings. In this regard, Kopnina's chapter stands as a critique of post-modernism from within. In studying Russian immigrants in two large Western European cities (Amsterdam and London), Kopnina asks the question of what constitutes a social unit, i.e. a community. She wonders whether one can define a community through 'objective' traits, when the social actors themselves do not claim to feel part of an ethnic community. However, through the process of fieldwork it emerges that the concept of community is something largely understood and constructively used by social actors themselves, and therefore the invisibility of the Russian community itself is what constitutes an important subject of anthropological inquiry.

The idea of 'unity through diversity' is examined in Moutsou's chapter based on fieldwork in Brussels, the city symbolically representing Europe. Moutsou argues against the idea of the nation-state imposing a homogenised view of people's identity and in favour of the concept of 'cultural intimacy', pioneered by Herzfeld (1997). She shows that the concept of 'cultural intimacy' allows us to glimpse at identities of social actors from a 'bottom-up' perspective, and to witness how abstract and cumbersome ideas of Europe become interpreted, evaluated, integrated and challenged by the local population. The Greek and the Turkish migrants in the city of Brussels find themselves encompassed by sometimes imposed, sometimes self-generated 'cultural intimacy' through widespread stereotypes of urban space and through their reactions to political processes taking place in the 'capital of Europe'. Social actors thus find themselves in a very complex urban space, where ideas of Europeanness get re-interpreted in the context of migrants' everyday lives.

Waldren uses instead a different approach in her chapter on Bosnian immigrants in the Spanish island of Majorca. Central to her exploration is the act of crossing social boundaries as a result of crossing borders. She addresses issues such as how identity is formed and reformed in different circumstances and settings, how gender differences can be built into future policy and planning, and how local activity relates to global politics and processes. In recounting the experiences and perceptions of migration of a Bosnian woman, the author shows that for women migration means not only movement, but also crossing gender boundaries: movement entails gender dislocation, and migrant women have to take on new social roles. In making the point that crossing boundaries constitutes both a physical

and a symbolic act, she shows how global economic and social trends are carried out in local encounters.

The third part of the volume continues the exploration of the act of 'crossing European boundaries' as constructed by social actors, yet it moves to an examination of the redefinition of the 'local' that this act involves. Although some of the chapters in this part develop the examination of minority groups started earlier, they concentrate on geographical areas usually described as the 'periphery'. Yet the authors show that the 'periphery' is also directly affected by the act of 'crossing', albeit in different ways from the 'centres' of Europe.

In anthropological studies the concept of 'boundaries' has often been used to indicate social permeability as well as a focus on individual social actors. The distinction between 'border' and 'boundary' is examined in Kelleher's chapter, which refers to 'borders' rather than boundaries to indicate an unresolved national issue and conflict-ridden area in Northern Ireland. Yet Kelleher's approach focuses on the narratives of an individual female actor, who tries to discover the truth of her brother's death, to highlight the inappropriateness of the concept of 'border' when it comes to peoples' everyday lives in conflicted areas of Europe. He shows how research on transformation requires an understanding of how social actors seek to rebuild a new order with the instruments of the 'old' (i.e. 'tradition'). In recounting the narratives of how women make their own space in the context of global changes and contest the State's organisation of meaning, he argues that women have also resisted some of the projects of the powerful, and further asserts the significance of the 'local' in understanding the 'global'.

The concepts of intersubjectivity and interpersonal relations as a locus for the political are central in Evergeti's work. Evergeti's chapter makes an important shift from the official and contradictory discourses about the Muslim minority in Greece to an actual detailed study of people's ethnic identities in space. After examining the many contradictory accounts of what constitutes the so-called 'Muslim minority', their origins and multiple and often mutually exclusive links with Greece, Turkey and Islam, Evergeti deconstructs the politics behind such discourses. She focuses on the social actors and the complexity of their lives and interaction. This study enables her to draw the conclusion that geographical boundaries are actually closely linked with human interaction. In leaving aside official discourses surrounding Muslim minorities, she highlights how identity formation and living with others in a space are all about a flexible but also resilient interpersonal bargaining.

Deltsou's chapter is instead an example of an anthropological understanding of selfhood through fieldwork. Deltsou studies the interaction and stereotyping of immigrants from the former Soviet Union in Greece in relation to the ambivalent political position of Greece towards the idea of Europe.