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Europe/Crisis: New Keywords of “the Crisis” in and of “Europe”

NEW KEYWORDS COLLECTIVE

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EUROPE /CRISIS: INTRODUCING NEW KEYWORDS OF “THE CRISIS” IN AND OF “EUROPE”

Martina Tazzioli + Nicholas De Genova

“CRISIS”

Charles Heller, Nicholas De Genova, Maurice Stierl,
Martina Tazzioli + Huub van Baar

“MIGRANT CRISIS” / “REFUGEE CRISIS”

Nicholas De Genova, Elena Fontanari, Fiorenza Picozza,
Laia Soto Bermant, Aila Spathopoulou, Maurice Stierl,
Zakeera Suffee, Martina Tazzioli, Huub van Baar + Can Yildiz

NEW KEYWORDS OF “THE CRISIS” IN AND OF “EUROPE”

emerged from a meeting of the research network on “The ‘European’ Question: Postcolonial Perspectives on Migration, Nation, and Race,” convened by Nicholas De Genova and Martina Tazzioli at King’s College London on June 25–26, 2015, which included the participation of: Soledad Álvarez-Velasco, Manuela Bojadzije, Sebastian Cobarrubias, Nicholas De Genova, Elena Fontanari, Evelina Gambino, Giorgio Grappi, Charles Heller, Yolande Jansen, Bernd Kasperek, Shahram Khosravi, Sandro Mezzadra, Lorenzo Pezzani, Fiorenza Picozza, Lisa Riedner, Stephan Scheel, Laia Soto Bermant, Maurice Stierl, Zakeera Suffee, Martina Tazzioli, Huub van Baar, and Can Yildiz.

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**NUMBERS (OR, THE SPECTACLE OF STATISTICS
IN THE PRODUCTION OF “CRISIS”)**

Maurice Stierl, Charles Heller + Nicholas De Genova

“HUMANITARIAN CRISIS”

Martina Tazzioli, Nicholas De Genova, Elena Fontanari,
Irene Peano + Maurice Stierl

MOBILITY

Lisa Riedner, Soledad Álvarez-Velasco, Nicholas De Genova,
Martina Tazzioli + Huub van Baar

(THE CRISIS OF) “EUROPEAN VALUES”

Can Yildiz, Nicholas De Genova, Yolande Jansen, Laia Soto Bermant,
Aila Spathopoulou, Maurice Stierl + Zakeera Suffee

“CRISIS”

Over recent weeks, months, and indeed, years, there has been an astounding proliferation in public discourse of the word “crisis,” particularly in the European context. Most recently, we have seen the repeated invocation of a “refugee crisis,” alternately labeled a “migrant crisis.” Similarly, this same phenomenon has been depicted in terms of a “humanitarian crisis” while nonetheless depicted always also as a “crisis of the asylum system” and a “crisis” of Europe’s borders, which is to say, a “crisis” of “border control” (simultaneously signaling a “crisis” of enforcement and policing and a “crisis” of refugee “protection”), and thus, a “crisis of the Schengen zone.” Notably, alarmist reactions to the mul-

tifarious “crises” relating to the (“unauthorized”) movement of people – particularly across and within the EU’s borders – have largely served to justify the necessity of new “emergency” policies and the deployment of new means of control. Nonetheless, migration is sometimes figured as the necessary “solution” to what is often depicted as Europe’s “demographic crisis.” Furthermore, this particular conjuncture of “crisis” talk (and crisis-mongering) cannot be separated from the more pervasive discourse of “*the* crisis”: “economic crisis,” “financial crisis,” “debt crisis,” “crisis of Euro-zone,” “banking crisis” and the attendant recourse to a widespread promotion of the notion that “austerity” is necessary and inevitable. Within this wider framework of austerity policies, moreover, we likewise have become attuned to a more or less permanent “housing crisis.” Alongside this more narrowly economic (neoliberal) repertoire of “crisis” discourse, therefore, we have been subjected to a parallel invocation of a “crisis of European institutions,” associated with the perennial problem of the European Union’s “democratic deficit” and thus also a “crisis of democracy,” sometimes equated even with a “crisis of the idea of Europe.” As scholars of critical migration and refugee studies, we propose that the so-called “crisis” – currently mobilized in the face of the horrific effects of the EU-ropean border and immigration regime and visa policies by the mass media, politicians, policy makers, and other state as well as non-governmental authorities – can provide a prism for unpacking and interrogating these numerous interlocking “crises.”

Notably, it is another “crisis” – a “crisis” of “the Arab world” or “the crisis in the Middle East” – which is figured as the source of an inordinate portion of the illegalized migrants and refugees entering EU territory through its external borders. Syrian nationals fleeing the civil war have been particularly prominent, but the collapse of the Gaddafi regime in Libya, previously one of the advance outposts of the externalized EU migration regime (see “Externalization,” in Casas-Cortes et al. 2015), has consequently enabled illegalized migrants from across Africa, the Middle East, and beyond to cross the country’s porous frontiers in their quests to access Europe by braving the European border zone in the Mediterranean Sea. Libya’s “failed state” thus re-appears now as one of the “weak links” in the chain of “European” border control. Thus, the “migration crisis” is often discursively and analytically represented as a byproduct of “the crisis in the Middle East,” the labeling of which is inseparable from justifications for renewed military interventions in an amorphous geo-political region from Afghanistan to Somalia to Mali (with repercussions even further afield, as in Nigeria and Cameroon).

Indeed, it would appear that the externalization of “the migration crisis” has become a key strategic objective of the EU. Insinuating that the “crisis” itself has been, in effect, inflicted upon “Europe,” the highest ranking figures in the EU have concurred that it is the proper role of the states in its wider “neighborhood” to solve the “crisis.” Accordingly, under the cloud of this abnegation of EU-ropean responsibility, the EU and numerous African states engaged in a two-month long tug of war, culminating on 11–12 November 2015 in the summit in Valetta, Malta. The Valetta negotiations reiterated a well-worn managerial concern “to address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement,”¹ and declared a new “advance” with respect to “returning persons who

1. European Union, Valetta Conference, Final Declaration <<http://www.statewatch.org/news/2015/nov/eu-africa-Valetta-Summit-declaration-final.pdf>>

are not entitled to stay in Europe,”² a very tired euphemism for the obligatory neocolonial collusion of “sending countries” in the deportation of their nationals from EU-rope. Despite the proclamations of mutual “interdependence” between “Europe” and its African “neighbors,” therefore, Valetta exposed the extent to which the ongoing “migrant crisis” has served to authorize anew the protracted (post-)colonial struggle over dominance and power. Hence, EU-rope’s highest ambition has been to find ways to export its “crisis” to its poorer “neighbors,” and thus has sought to convert its “crisis” into a neoliberal test of post-colonial “responsibility,” whereby the ostensible legitimacy and sovereignty of African nation-states is presumed to derive from dutiful service to the mandates of re-fortifying the borders of “Europe.” Nonetheless, despite these rhetorical gestures and extortionist power plays, the Valetta Conference appears to have produced little substantive action: at present, no African country has any “readmission” agreement in force with the EU (Bunyan 2015).

Meanwhile, in the aftermath of the attacks of 13 November 2015 in Paris and the resultant proclamation of a “state of emergency” in France – although virtually all of the alleged culprits in this attack appear to have been EU citizens – multiple European authorities have resorted to calls for the reactivation of internal borders within the EU, in an abrupt departure from the Schengen agreements, as well as an unprecedented securitization of the Schengen area’s external borders. In fact, over the last year, we have repeatedly witnessed the alternation of the opening and closure of various EU border-crossing points – between Greece and Macedonia, between Croatia and Slovenia, between Italy and France, between Sweden and Denmark, among many others – and the temporary suspension of Schengen in the name of “emergencies” associated with what has come increasingly to be represented as a twofold “human threat”: a bewildering and uncontrollable “mass influx” of refugees escaping war zones, and an amorphous “invasion” of migrants or refugees re-figured as potential “terrorists.” Furthermore, following the moral panic over sexual assaults during the 2016 New Year’s Eve festivities in Köln/Cologne – allegedly perpetrated by unruly “North African or Middle Eastern” young men (purportedly including “asylum-seekers”) – newly arrived, “culturally alien,” “unassimilated” (and by implication, unassimilable) “Muslim”/“Arab” “asylum-seekers” are similarly re-figured now as potential “criminals,” and particularly as “sexual predators” and “rapists,” prone to dangerous and violent types of “deviancy,” to be rendered deportable and expelled. Hence, the “emergency” associated with the uncontrolled arrival of migrants and refugees has quickly become not only a matter of border enforcement but also mundane policing, and signals an incipient “crisis” of social order.

Notably, the European “debt crisis” also seems to be deeply intertwined with the “migration crisis”: among the countless criticisms of fiscal “irresponsibility” leveled against Greece (now more than ever severely debilitated by EU austerity policies), for instance, it is crucial to recall the allegation regarding the Greek state’s apparent incapacity to “manage” the influx of an estimated three-quarters of a million refugees and migrants who arrived on its shores in 2015 alone, leading to threats to suspend Greece’s inclusion in the Schengen zone “unless it overhauls its response to the migration crisis.”³

2. <http://www.statewatch.org/news/2015/nov/eu-africa-Valetta-Summit-tusk-final-remarks.pdf>

3. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/463dc7a0-982b-11e5-9228-87e603d47bdc.html#axzz3wM7qqdSu>

The wild proliferation and continuous eruption of the language of “crisis” evidently commands some critical scrutiny (cf. Agamben 2013; Béjin and Morin 1976; Foucault 2007; Klein 2007; Koselleck 2006; Roitman 2013; Shank 2008; Starn 1971; Parrochia 2008). First of all, if the term “crisis” is commonly used to denote a situation of disruption within a prior situation of stability, and thereby associated with imminent danger demanding immediate action, we must recognize that – regarding illegalized migration into and across Europe – the very distinction between (and separation of) what is ostensibly “stable” and “in crisis” is altogether tenuous, indeed, dubious. Illegalized migration in Europe arises as a very predictable and inevitable effect of a migration regime that forecloses mobility for the great majority of people from most of the world. The illegalized migration regime is geographically heterogeneous and extensive and temporally enduring. Furthermore, it operates through the putative “failure” of multiple states to prevent the exit or entry of migrants and refugees who have been effectively denied any legal right to access these various states’ territories. A state of “crisis” with regard to illegalized migration across the EU’s frontiers is therefore the norm rather than the exception, and the convulsive but plainly routine government of illegalized migration appears to both operate through “crisis” and yet to be in a permanent crisis itself. Likewise, the global financial “crisis” of 2007–08 and its continuing repercussions within the EU and the Euro-zone are best understood to be unsettling, destructive, and violent features of the normal functioning of capitalism, rather than some unforeseen or unfathomable anomaly. As David Harvey demonstrates, “crises are essential to the reproduction of capitalism. It is in the course of crises that the instabilities of capitalism are confronted, reshaped and re-engineered to create a new version of what capitalism is about” (Harvey 2014:ix). Furthermore, the ongoing turmoil of war and civil war across multiple regions of the globe, and particularly in the Middle East and Africa, can only be adequately comprehended as the very predictable result of colonial and neocolonial occupations and military interventions during not only the last several years but rather over the last century or more (Gregory 2004). Hence, we can only ask: When was the Middle East *not* “in crisis”? When was Africa *not* “in crisis”? While we must be wary of recapitulating well-worn colonialist and Orientalist tropes attributing violence and volatility to these regions, it is imperative to draw attention not to any supposedly inherent proclivity toward violence or incapacity for self-government but rather to the contradictory legacies of conflict and the enduring realities of social and political fracture that originate with European (and Euro-American) imperialism and their deeply destabilizing effects.

Hence, it is doubtful whether the “crisis” label can serve to clarify anything, and rather more likely that it serves instead to further obfuscate. As Janet Roitman (2013:5) cautions, “through the term ‘crisis,’ the singularity of events is abstracted by a generic logic, making crisis a term that seems self-explanatory.” It is therefore instructive to recall the political uses that “crisis” may be pressed to serve. Labeling a complex situation (such as that of the contemporary dynamics of mass migration and refugee movements) as a “crisis” and therefore as “exceptional” tends to conceal the violence and permanent exception that are

the norm under global capitalism and our global geo-politics, and may serve to perpetuate the conditions that have led to the purported “emergency” in the first place. Reinhart Koselleck (2006) offers a useful genealogy of the term “crisis,” underscoring that the concept originally evokes decision and judgment, helping to draw our attention to the new spaces of intervention and government that discourses about the (multiple) European “crises” have opened up. Indeed, the proclamation of “crisis” consequently serves the ends of particular forms of governmental intervention, usually through the deployment of authoritarian measures: a situation of “crisis,” after all, appears to demand immediate responses that cannot afford the more prolonged temporalities of democratic debate and deliberative processes, or so we are told. In this regard, Giorgio Agamben (2013) has incisively remarked:

The concept ‘crisis’ has indeed become a motto of modern politics, and for a long time it has been part of normality in any segment of social life... ‘Crisis’ in ancient medicine meant a judgement, when the doctor noted at the decisive moment whether the sick person would survive or die. The present understanding of crisis, on the other hand, refers to an enduring state. So this uncertainty is extended into the future, indefinitely. It is exactly the same with the theological sense; the Last Judgement was inseparable from the end of time. Today, however, judgement is divorced from the idea of resolution and repeatedly postponed. So the prospect of a decision is ever less, and an endless process of decision never concludes. Today crisis has become an instrument of rule. It serves to legitimize political and economic decisions that in fact dispossess citizens and deprive them of any possibility of decision.

As if to illustrate Agamben’s contention, the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Gilles De Kerkove, glibly remarked to the European Parliament’s Civil Liberties Committee in a meeting following the *Charlie Hebdo* shootings: “Never let a serious crisis go to waste.”⁴ Here we confront the well-worn sensibility that has always informed the most reactionary political forces as well as the most parasitic forms of disaster capitalism (Klein 2007; Loewenstein 2015; Mirowski 2013) – that “crisis” always signals “opportunity.”

What “crisis”? Whose “crisis”? Who gains, and who loses, from the labeling of the present conjuncture as “crisis”? These are the urgent and critical questions that we must ask every time we encounter the word “crisis.” If we are skeptical of the language of “crisis” in analytical terms and critical of the political consequences that this rhetoric facilitates, we nevertheless certainly cannot deny that we have been confronting a period of momentous transformations in and around Europe, which is still unfolding rapidly before our eyes, and for which we are at pains to provide an account. If the term “crisis” can be of any use, then, it is in recalling its etymological meaning, from the Greek *krisis* (from *krinein*): “to separate, decide, judge, a distinctive force” (Starn 1971:3; cf. Agamben 2015; Koselleck 2006). A crisis, rather than referring to an external and objective state of affairs “out there,” would instead point to a moment of deep change that challenges our capacity to judge and make sense of it. If there is in

4. < <http://www.statewatch.org/news/2015/jan/com-pnr-plans.htm>>. This phrase has often been attributed to Winston Churchill, but there appears to be no firm evidence for this claim. More recently, it was popularized by Rahm Emmanuel, current Mayor of Chicago and former White House Chief of Staff for Barack Obama. The promiscuous circulation of this sensibility among political elites internationally would seem to verify that unabashed opportunism regarding “crisis” has emerged as part of the political grammar of neoliberalism (see also Mirowski 2013).

fact any use in naming any crisis at all, therefore, it may be first and foremost an *epistemic* crisis – a crisis of knowledge and the categories of knowledge.

How do we, as scholars of borders and migration, propose to contribute to the considerably more expansive collective task of producing a critical “history of the present” (Foucault 1984), in a way that would be grounded in our particular field of inquiry but extend beyond it? How might we, in Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson’s terms (2013), use borders and migration as “epistemic devices” to interrogate our contemporary historical and sociopolitical conjuncture? Some of the conceptual repertoire that has been developed to critically analyze borders and migration may be instructive, we propose, for making sense of some of the wider socio-spatial recompositions at work in the present historical conjuncture. Migration and borders undoubtedly serve as “political seismographers” of sorts, registering, through their movements in time and space, some of the deep transformations affecting the wider historical and geo-political scene, in this instance, “Europe” and its vicinity. However, the movements of migrants and refugees themselves are not simply “moved” by deeper or greater forces, and rather must be understood to constitute subjective and autonomous motive forces of social and political change in their own right (see “Subjectivity” in Casas-Cortes et al. 2015).

Furthermore, it is crucial to note that the proliferation of a “crisis” of borders and migration “in” Europe also involves a kind of spatial proliferation that makes it impossible for any of these phenomena to be neatly confined within the presumed parameters of “Europe”: we cannot “contain” our analysis within “European” (much less, EU-ropean) geo-political boundaries (see “Counter-mapping” in Casas-Cortes et al. 2015). Indeed, the very borders and boundaries attributed to “Europe” are unsettled by the transnational dynamics and inter-continental scale of migrant and refugee movements, and therefore by the spatial multiplication of socio-political interconnections among and across these different but interrelated “crises.” Moreover, the prevailing focus on the “problems” that these “crises” cause for and in “Europe,” or on how these “problems” would appear to have been caused somewhere “outside” of “Europe” or on its “margins,” persistently portrays these “troubling” movements as chain reactions that originate somewhere “external” to “Europe” (or at least outside of its “core”). Affiliated thus to what always seem to be endemically chaotic borderlands or warzones – and only worsened through the opportunism of “smugglers” or “corrupt” government officials in these spaces ostensibly marred by lawlessness or, at best, a deficit of the “rule of law” – such illegalized migrant and refugee mobilities are depicted as moving always through regions that are insufficiently policed, finally to end up in “Europe.” Apparently compounding lawlessness with still more lawlessness, defying the “rule of law” with their blatant “illegality,” these “irregular” migrants and refugees can apparently only corrode the socio-economic, cultural, political, legal “order.” Such imaginings and representations of contemporary illegalized migration suggest not only that “Europe” is confronted with a “crisis” that originates “elsewhere,” therefore, but also that “Europe” is a kind of “victim” of unfathomable conflicts erupting elsewhere, derived from the incapacity or incompetence of (postcolonial) “others” to adequately govern themselves. By implication, the “unwashed masses”

who flee such places similarly can be presumed to be essentially incompetent for properly “modern” (“democratic,” self-governing) citizenship (De Genova 2013b). Likewise, such representations insinuate that “Europe” (with its multiple contradictory regimes of citizenship, security, and border and migration management) is somehow an “innocent” bystander, not implicated in the “causes” of these “foreign” conflicts and “crises,” whether in direct and immediate socio-economic, developmentalist, and (geo-)political senses, or in the more complex and mediated historical sense (Walters 2010).

Thus, critically analyzing the “European” border “crisis” involves repudiating at the same time the sort of methodological Europeanism (and methodological Eurocentrism) that sustains many analyses about migration and borders “in” Europe, by refusing to uncritically assume “Europe” (or indeed, EU-rope) to be the singular or primary spatial referent of these multiple crises (Garelli and Tazzioli 2013b; van Baar 2016a). What is more, from the point of view of sheer numbers, the “refugee crisis” has a far greater magnitude in other places, particularly in the immediate borderlands of the various conflict zones, and thus, represents a far more dire “crisis” for many countries of the so-called Global South. Nevertheless, the current transformations have in common the distinguishing characteristics of profound spatial upheaval both in Europe and beyond, and involve a veritable re-drawing of borders and other spatial boundaries (see “Counter-mapping” in Casas-Cortes et al. 2015). Again, to make sense of what otherwise presents itself as a “crisis” of border control for the various sovereign powers implicated in the heterogeneous and externalized superintendence of the European border regime, the primacy of the autonomy and subjectivity of human mobility is paramount.

Let us briefly examine two illustrative and instructive examples:

Migration and “the Arab Spring”: The series of Arab uprisings that ensued from the catalytic events in Tunisia, which culminated in the fall of the Ben Ali regime on 14 January 2011, eventually included the fall of regimes in Libya and Egypt and situations of severe political unrest in other countries such as Bahrain and Yemen, as well as protracted civil wars in Libya and Syria. Not unlike the protracted formations of migrant and refugee movements from Afghanistan and Iraq, the plight of Syrians fleeing violence since 2012 exemplifies the paradigm of migration as a mere “reflection” (or byproduct) of wider global geo-political dynamics, since we may perceive these mobilities as “determined” by the successive phases of the conflict. However, such an account fundamentally fails to account for the collective movement that these migrants and refugees constitute, overcoming each and every border that has been erected to obstruct their pathways and impede their trajectories, and therefore apprehensible – objectively speaking – as one of the most important instances of mass transnational civil disobedience in recent history. Perhaps in hindsight, we may one day regard these mass global movements of border defiance as we now understand such historical events as the Salt March led by Gandhi or the March on Washington led by Martin Luther King. The migration of nearly 30,000 Tunisians in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Ben Ali regime allows us to think further about the articulation between migration and revolutionary processes, rather than conceiving of migration as merely a secondary effect of

an apparently more primary political process that may be imagined to be strictly confined spatially and delimited temporally to an “elsewhere,” ostensibly outside of Europe (Garelli et al, 2013; Garelli and Tazzioli 2013a; Tazzioli 2014). Tunisians seized the opportunity of the temporary power vacuum in January 2011 to cross the sea to Italy in broad daylight, often to the sound of songs and the beating of drums. By seizing their freedom to move across the borders that had been sealed to them through the collaboration between the Ben Ali regime and the EU, they indicated that their aspirations to freedom and justice were directed not only in opposition to the way their country was governed within, but also against the way they were governed by the EU’s violent and discriminatory migration regime from beyond (but also encompassing) Tunisia’s borders (Garelli et al, 2013). Once they arrived on Italian territory, Tunisians succeeded in evading controls for a time, sending a crisis of control rippling through the Schengen zone – with particularly de-stabilizing consequences between Italy and France. In the summer of 2011, having arrived in Paris, Tunisian migrants occupied a building and posted banners audaciously announcing their own spirit of revolutionary generosity toward a Europe wracked by “the crisis”: “We’ve come to help you do the same.” Notably, European social movements contesting the imposition of austerity policies thereafter resorted to the repertoire of occupying the central squares of their most important cities, often explicitly invoking the inspiration that came from their counterparts during the dramatic events of the so-called “Arab Spring.”

Migration and the EU’s Uneven Geography: The European “debt crisis” and the “crisis of the Euro-zone” have been both the product of EU’s uneven geography and a catalyst further aggravating this unevenness (Gambarotto and Solari 2014; Hadjimichalis 2011). As Étienne Balibar (2012) has incisively noted, “one part of Europe is transforming another part into an internal post-colony” through a process of “zoning” in which “the inequalities of globalization reproduce themselves” in the heart of these countries and regions. However, “the limits between the zones,” Balibar continues, “are blurry, unpredictable,” contributing to the destabilization of “historical nations”: it is difficult to anticipate “between which countries will they pass, or within which country, between which regions.” It seems to us impossible to apprehend the current rippling effect of the “crisis” of migration and borders without inscribing it as a volatile force co-constituted with these shifting zones, the moving contours of which can be partly read through the very mobilities of migrants and refugees. Migrants and refugees have crossed the sea or trekked across the Balkans, but have consistently sought to move further onward from their ports of arrival or border crossings by land in the southern and eastern European “peripheries,” and aimed for northern and western countries where they may have better prospects of receiving legal protection and social benefits, as well as finding jobs or linking up with already existing migratory networks. Migrants’ movements thus register and maneuver among the increasing differentials within European territory – not only in terms of narrowly economic gaps between standards of living, but also with regard to social welfare provision, legal protection, and so on – and thus constitute a kind of “rating agency from below”⁵: migrants are not only “voting with their feet” through “strategies of exit” (Hirschman

5. We are thankful to Eyal Weizman for suggesting this phrase.

1970), but also “rating with their feet,” down-grading or disqualifying countries that they deem to be not sufficiently “European” – not fulfilling their ideal of “Europe” as an obscure object of desire. However, these aspirations defy the Dublin regulations – according to which the first EU member state to register an incoming migrant/refugee’s petition for asylum is responsible for processing the individual applicants’ claim, and to which the “asylum-seekers” are thereafter to be spatially confined. Thus, migrants and refugees’ desires have instigated a deep political crisis at the level EU institutions as well as between member states, as exemplified by the tense situations at the borders between Italy and France (Ventimiglia), between France and the UK (Calais), as well as between the numerous countries of Eastern Europe and their more prosperous neighbors to the west and north, such as Germany and Sweden. Both in terms of the comparative attraction for migrants, and in terms of the lines of conflict surrounding the different states’ duties and competencies for border enforcement, an increasing core-periphery dynamic is at work within the space of the EU. The pressure being currently exerted on the so-called “frontline states” (the member states located at the EU’s southern and eastern borders) further confirms that the uneven geography of “Europe” is continuously being reconfigured. Hence, we are observing forms of internal externalization (see Heller and Pezanni, in their adjoining contribution to “Near Futures Online”), reminiscent of the processes of externalizing migration enforcement and border control to various non-EU countries since the beginning of the 2000s (see “Externalization” in Casas-Corte et al. 2015). In the process, the increasing role of Frontex calls for new EU-level border policing and asylum processing agencies, and the more general pressure of states such as France and Germany on member states at the “front lines” of the European border regime, demanding greater vigilance and dedication to the ceaseless task of controlling human mobility, begins to more and more resemble the troikaization of migration control.

It is impossible to understand the current rapidly shifting trajectories of illegalized migrants and refugees, and the volatile bordering practices that are desperately aimed at containing them, short of articulating them within these wider socio-economic and political processes. Nevertheless, as these examples show, migration and borders are deeply enmeshed and participate in the wider transversal transformations affecting the meta-“European” region, and conversely provide a productive and indispensable perspective from which to interrogate them. Through the critical lens of migration and borders, therefore, “the crisis” in and of Europe – ramifying across the full spectrum of economy, politics, law, and policy – may be revealed in a radically new light.

CH, NDG, MS, ZS, MT, HvB
