

Group themes and readings

Thursday, 24 September 2015

13:43

- I. WALLS and FENCES
 - a. Wendy Brown
 - b. Setti
- 2. BORDER CROSSINGS / CROSSING BORDERS**
 - a. Politics of border
 - b. STÉPHANE ROSIÈRE and Jones
 - c. Parizot et al
3. MIGRATION AS EVENT / IMMIGRATION AS SURVIVAL
 - a. Held
 - b. Molodikov
 - c. Silverstein
4. CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE
 - a. Parizot et al
 - b. Setti
 - c. STÉPHANE ROSIÈRE and Jones
5. WAR, CONFLICT AND MIGRATION
 - Bennet (Thomas Demand)
 - Held

~~scious 'we' of Howard's logic is itself imagined.~~ The unity of the nation-state is achieved in and through the invocation of a border—the border functions in this register as the very object of imagination around which (national) identity is created and recreated. Contemporary discourses of national security and border protection are directed not simply at the exclusion of the unwanted other but also towards the production and regulation of political subjectivity within the polity. The border allows us to project a limit to the community and to create an 'us'. Jean-Luc Nancy tells us that this process of the creation of a community of unity (what he calls 'communion') is a form of 'mythic' thought.

Myth is that to which a political community appeals in order to found its existence as such and to perpetuate that existence as the intimate sharing of an identity or essence. The passage from the political to the sphere of politics occurs, then in myth, insofar as it is in myth that the existence of lived community is founded and perpetuated (James 2006, p. 196).

Nancy rejects this attempt to enclose the community, claiming that the community exceeds any possible representation of it. If this is the case then the border, as that which attempts to define a unity of community, is to be resisted.

Kafka's short story, 'The Great Wall of China', presents us with an interruption of the mythic thought of community's unity. As Peter Hutchings will later discuss, the story relates the building of the Great Wall of China through the eyes of one of its engineers. However, what begins as a simple tale quickly becomes something much more complex. We begin to see how the wall is in fact a technology of community. Because each of the very many engineers is periodically rotated around the country, the sense of the struggle for the wall creates the very sense of the community in unity. The wall operates in this order to enclose the community, much like in Benedict Anderson's analysis newspapers allowed for the creation of a sense of nation by involving the readership in imagining all the other readers (Anderson 1991). However, this nation-building does not end there, because Kafka goes on to overturn or deconstruct this sense of an operative unity of the community. His short story ends with a number of allegorical tales. The one that matches our purpose here is that of the monarch. The size of the country implies that no province knows the name of the current Emperor:

Thus, then do our people deal with departed emperors, but the living ruler they confuse among the dead. If once, only once in a man's lifetime, an imperial official on his tour of the provinces should arrive by chance at our village, make certain announcements in the name of the government, scrutinize the tax

lists... [when he mentions the name of the ruler] then a smile flits over every face.... Why, they think to themselves, he's speaking of a dead man as if he were alive, this Emperor of his died long ago, the dynasty is blotted out, the good official is having his joke with us.... If from such appearances any one should draw the conclusion that in reality we have no Emperor, he would not be far from the truth (Kafka 1973, pp. 78–79).

Kafka's community, despite the projected unity that the wall brings, is ungovernable. The imagined unity of the mythic thought is exceeded in every moment by the community itself. Thus, the question of the territorial unity given by the projected space of the border is to be rejected. Community always exceeds its mythic representations. This use of the border is an excuse to create an oppressive unifying notion of communion. As we can see, the politics of the border are not only reducible to the exclusionary and governmental functions of managing and dividing populations, of casting out and rejecting, but also of shoring up and stabilising that which remains within the border.

Teichopolitics: Re-considering Globalisation Through the Role of Walls and Fences

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This article considers the trend in many countries towards securitised immigration policies and “hardening” of borders through the construction of walls or fences. In contrast the borderless world of globalisation, it identifies these attempts to strengthen control of borders as teichopolitics: the politics of building barriers. This article analyses the different types of hardened borders that exist today and proposes a typology of frontlines, fences/walls, and closed straights. Then the article maps the locations of these barriers and argues that although other justifications ranging from smuggling to terrorism are often put forward, these barriers are mostly connected with managing immigration flows. Indeed, many of these barriers are located on important economic or social discontinuity lines, precisely where the system reveals its underlying logics. These walls and fences symbolise the emergence of a privileged few who actually live the promise of globalisation and defend its privileges through teichopolitics.

This view, of course, was proven correct. Far from the optimistic representations of many scholars, the contemporary world is characterised by the increasing enclosure of territories *between* sovereign states through the construction of walls and fences on international borders and *within* sovereign states through the development of various methods of sustaining inequality such as gated communities. Even beyond the construction of physical barriers, this reality is underlined through new restrictive immigration laws that have been put in place around the world from Italy to the United States.⁴ Rather than welcoming flows of people, these symbolic and physical barriers institutionalise privilege through legal exclusions and the blunt force of barriers.⁵

In order to conceptualise this new paradigm of long stretches of closed borders and the hardening of crossing points this article introduces the term *teichopolitics*. This neologism, coined by Ballif and Rosière (2009), is linked to notions of biopolitics and biopower proposed by the French philosopher Michel Foucault. These connected notions refer mainly to the practice of modern states and their regulation of individual lives and populations through “an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations.”¹³ In the case of teichopolitics, biopower is manifested in the denial of the right to move although this right is proclaimed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.¹⁴

The word teichopolitics is coined from the ancient Greek word *τειχος* (*teichos*) meaning “city wall”. Teichopolitics is, in short, the politics of building barriers on borders for various security purposes. The next section

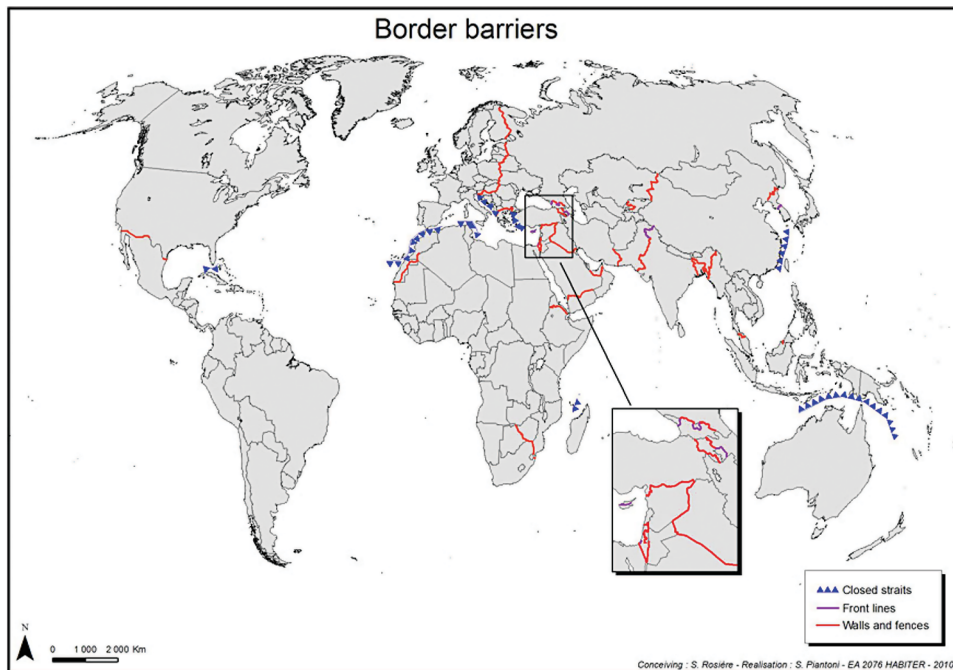


FIGURE 1 Border barriers: A world map (color figure available online).

Source: Habiter laboratory, 2010.

TYPOLGY OF BORDER BARRIERS

Teichopolitics is not simply about building walls or fences. Instead, it encompasses the whole range of barriers that limit the movement of people and goods across borders including administrative measures and military installations which often support the barriers. Here we consider four types of border closure, which together capture the broader trend towards securitised borders.

Frontline

The first type of closure border refers back to the older military purpose of boundaries and is characterised by the existence of an empty space (no man's land [*sic*]) separating two zones of military installations. This type of border closure has become increasingly rare as the vast majority of states have been integrated into the sovereign state system and have joined the UN which condemns the use of force in bilateral relations.²⁴ Most of the contemporary frontlines were primarily erected during the Cold War period and have been in place for many years. They often mark a disputed area

TABLE 1 World border barriers: Location, length and typology (all lengths in kilometres)

Country 1	Country 2	Walls-fences	Front lines
World Border Barriers (alphabetically, with name of decision-maker first)			
Abkhazia	Georgia		80
Botswana	Zimbabwe	813	
Brunei	Malaysia	21	
China	North Korea	1416	
Cyprus (green line)			180
Ethiopia	Eretria		912
European Union (Schengen area)	Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova	4278	
Greece	Turkey	206	
India	Bangladesh	4053	
India	Pakistan (Line of Control)		740
India	Pakistan (without LOC)	2172	
Iraq (US administration)	Jordan	238	
Iraq (US administration)	Syria	605	
Iran	Pakistan	909	
Israel	West Bank	785	
Israel	Gaza strip	51	
Israel	Egypt	266	
Israel	Jordan	238	
Israel	Lebanon	79	
Israel	Syria		76
Karabakh	Azerbaijan		220
Kazakhstan	China	1533	
Korean DMZ			239
Kuwait	Iraq	240	
Morocco 'sand wall'			2720
Russia	North Korea	19	
Saudi Arabia	Iraq	814	
Saudi Arabia	UAE	457	
Saudi Arabia	Yemen	1458	
South Africa	Mozambique	491	
South Africa	Zimbabwe	225	
South Ossetia	Georgia		100
Spain	Morocco	17	
Syria	Turkey	818	
Thailand	Malaysia	506	
Turkey	Armenia	267	
United Arab Emirates (UAE)	Oman	410	
United States	Mexico	3140	
Uzbekistan	Kyrgyzstan	1099	
subtotal		27624	5267
total			32 891
%		83.9	13.1

where two states continue to claim territory on the other side and a peace treaty has not yet been negotiated (Korea, Cyprus, Israel/Palestine, Kashmir). The longest example of a frontline is in Western Sahara where Morocco built 2,700 km of fortified sand walls, which represent 51.6 percent of existing frontline on Earth. Nevertheless, frontlines still represent roughly 13 percent of hardened borders in the world (Figure 2).

TYPE	FENCE	WALL	FRONT	CLOSED STRAITS
Spatial organisation				
Barrier Morphology	Fence	Wall	No man's land and front lines	Sea
Cross-border relations	Low to high	Low to high	Null (or low)	Low to high
Examples	Kazakhstan / China	USA / Mexico	Kashmir (India/Pakistan)	Gibraltar (Marocco/Spain)

Legend :

	International boundary		Low density region
	Fence		No man's land / Sea
	Wall		Military settlement
	Synapse / gate road		Town
			Flows

Realisation : S. Rosière
Cartography : Plantoni - 2009

FIGURE 2 Types of border-barriers.

Fences and Walls

The second and third types of barriers are fences and walls, which are the most emblematic artifacts of teichopolitics. Despite the stigma associated with building walls after the construction of the Berlin Wall in August 1961, since 2000 many countries around the world have initiated or expanded these barriers (Figure 1 and Table 1). In most cases, the barriers had been under consideration for some time and the underlying cause was often immigration, smuggling, or defining the state's population or territory. However, the overt justifications often revolve around the immediate threat open borders pose in terms of terrorism and security.²⁶ In total, fences and walls represent roughly 87 percent of contemporary terrestrial border barriers.

Closed Straights

The final type of border barrier is the closed (or hardened) maritime strait. This kind of barrier is often forgotten by scholars but is very important for the purpose of controlling undesired migration flows. Straits are hardened if they coincide with strong wealth or political discontinuities (developed/less developed countries or free country/dictatorship) and are characterised by important undesired immigration flows. Examples include the Strait of Florida between the West Indies and the USA, the Gibraltar strait between North Africa and the EU or the Arafura and Timor seas between Indonesia and Australia). Such straits consist of a virtual fence implemented on the immigration side (the wealthy coast) and are organised around control towers to which various alarm systems, satellite, radar, and airplane reconnaissance are connected. These systems aim to detect the arrival of unauthorised boats and allow police vessels to be deployed to intercept them before they make landfall.

A STRICT HIERARCHY OF FLOWS

Mobility is an increasingly paradoxical dimension of our societies. Communication and trade implicate flows, and flows are not only an aspect of globalisation but the *sine qua none* of its existence. They are supposed to reveal the dynamism of the global economy and signify the transnational age. Transnational corporations rely heavily on these connections and international organisations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) promote global trade by easing the movement of particular types of goods and people. At the same time, global flows remain the nightmare of governments, administrations, and security agencies, as the expansion of the world economy produces extreme imbalances of power and wealth. The border barriers of teichopolitics are therefore instructive because they demonstrate that all mobilities and flows are not valued, but rather that globalisation implies a strict hierarchy of flows which can easily be sketched. Financial



Crossing borders, people and goods have to pass through multiple networks and complex identification devices. Making sense of these mutations requires sustained in-depth analysis as well as a wide range of modes of inquiry, critical methodologies, and interdisciplinary engagements, that can open the path for creative research (Van Houtum, Kramsch, and Ziefhofer 2004; Rumford 2007; Wastl-Walter 2012, Wilson and Donnan 2012).

While atlases express stability, or rather give the illusion of it, the *antiAtlas* wishes to reintroduce borders' dynamic nature and complex manifestations, and to provide a critical approach to border representations. We assert that systematic graphic visualization of space is neither the most acceptable nor the most desirable way of understanding borders. This does not mean that we disqualify the traditional map, as we do not contest the usefulness of maps as knowledge tools. What we claim is that maps' systematic compiling does not provide an adequate understanding of the complexity of borders. Maps are not only political but also epistemological devices. They are not simply representations of territories and borders, but they also contribute to their production. Border making is intrinsically linked to map drawing, as maps make the border conceptually as well as practically possible. Maps are models that determine the forms of their production and lay the conditions to produce relations in space.

The study of territorial shape is less essential today than examining borders' physical inertia, their contextual materialization and dematerialization, as well as their social construction and highly technological nature. Increasingly, borders appear as evolving devices with electronic and biological characteristics that function as bases for mobile control and surveillance. At the same time, they shape exchanges, generate formal and informal rules, and produce random definitions of what is legitimate and what is not. What is at stake, thus, is to understand the border as a perpetually changing process, using an alternative set of representations that do not reify power positions the way atlases do. In this sense, we prefer the path of multiple investigations to unearth the multifaceted nature of border-making processes. Beyond their topography, borders address sociological, psychological, anthropological and ontological issues. This means that we need to pay attention at the same time to their locations, forms and shapes, as well as to their modes of existence, constitutive processes and imaginaries.

From Territorial Control to Flows and Risk Management

The transformation of borders is intimately connected to the ways globalization has altered spatial interactions of all kinds, such as production chains, communication and defense systems, work and culture (Appadurai 1996). Freedom of mobility has been conceived through an economic perspective (Peck 2010; Amable 2011). Contemporary public policies that are usually qualified as "neoliberal" have been over-discussed and reinterpreted (Hilgers 2012), but it is widely admitted that they have promoted national reforms that include "free trade" and labor flexibility (Jacoby 2008, 2011), while promoting altogether on a global scale accounting standards (Mattli and Büthe 2005; Richardson and Eberlein 2011), banking prudential norms (Goodhart 2011; Young 2012), and fiscal consolidation (Kleinbard 2012; Blanchard and Leigh 2013; Hebous and Zimmermann 2013). At the same time, there are new strategies which aim at containing migratory pressures through the selective filtering of human flows (Shamir 2005).

These transformations have resulted in a contradiction between economic practices that increase unequal global development and the need to implement sustainable and fair global development (Sassen 2008). There is also a gap between national governments' policies, which are limited by their sovereignty, and the need to regulate transnational processes through global governance frameworks (Kramsch and Hooper 2004; Ba and Hoffmann 2005).

To address these contradictions, national governments have assigned state borders the function to guarantee people's security in a world characterized by transnational mobility of people, capital, goods and ideas. In other words, borders are supposed to allow a high level of mobility while protecting against social, economic, political, and public health risks the mobility of people generate.

While state borders are clearly more and more represented as legally intangible, it becomes increasingly problematic both for analytical purposes (Steinberg 2009; Johnson, Jones et al. 2011) and in terms of securitization (Brunet-Jailly 2007) to locate the border control within specific and stable places. The lines between domestic and external security have become blurred to such an extent that these domains are difficult to separate clearly. Yet, the role of borders does not decline. What is declining is the relative share of controls implemented at borders compared with the forms of control prior and after the border crossing. This share is declining due to the difficulty of distinguishing between internal and external origin of migrations, terrorism, economic and financial flows, software piracy and pollution.

In this context, border control is conceived and implemented in a selective and individualized manner. Seen in terms of risks, human, commercial and information flows become targets of surveillance, and border control becomes a form of risk management. Because these movements overflow the national space, security strategies now have to be conceived on a global scale and are heavily reliant on digital technologies that collect and store vast amounts of data about cross-border flows (Muller 2010; Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero 2008).

The main objective of border security policies is not so much to stop these flows as it is to improve the mechanisms to filter and channel them. Consequently, borders are functioning today as firewalls, aiming to facilitate legitimate traffic while containing unwanted people and commodities perceived as security risks (Walters 2006). For example, borders could be very porous to capital, but not to workers with low levels of formal education. The implementation of this new logic of control has led to an unprecedented process of integration of technology-based surveillance systems, such as, biometrics, numeric and satellite networks, RFID, drones, robots, radars, CO2 detectors, and others, used to embed borders into bodies and flows in order to detect, identify and follow their movements. In this way, flows can be monitored continuously along their entire journey (Popescu 2011). The main rationale for this convergence is based on the misplaced belief that technological automation will, inevitably, strengthen border control capabilities by reducing enforcement costs and eliminating human error.

Following these developments, border security is more concerned with the prediction and the management of the effects of risks rather than with their actual causes. This logic is in accordance with neoliberal thinking that sees addressing the root causes of various issues as more costly than dealing with their effects (Agamben 2014). In addition, the “*datafication*” of human and goods mobility and practices, as well as the emergence of the “*bigdata*” paradigm, have further reduced the focus on causes and meanings of processes we observe. Given the amount of data that can be collected and processed by computers, it becomes easier to analyze an event and what is linked to it in order to find out regularities and probabilities, than to understand the factors determining it (Cukier and Mayer-Schönberger 2013). This shift of focus in border control practices and representations could explain the actual convergence of free trade policies on the one hand, and growing security control apparatus on the other.

~~Shifting Forms of Mobility and Changing Border Regimes~~

~~Keeping flows under surveillance today means that border controls managed by police, custom services and private companies get partially redeployed away from the formal state borderlines and inside the national territory as well as inside other states' territories. Customs may manage extraterritorial operations (Baldaccini 2010). Visa checks are carried out in the country of migrants' origin, not only in embassies but also in private offices (Infantino 2010). Simultaneously, check points are multiplied in order to track people and providers of goods who have managed to circumvent surveillance systems. Lastly, in order to exclude certain categories of flows, special zones such as detention centers, staging areas in airports, or free zones have been created on uncertain juridical basis (Bigo 1997; Rahola 2007; Bernardot 2009; Mountz~~