

The ambiguity of borders; shaped through temporality and time.

Josephine Goverts

Piet Zwart - Interior architecture and Research. Critical strategies, G. Abbasi, December 19th, 2022

There has been a shift in the last few decades, with increasing spatial ambiguity of borders. The borders are no longer, unambiguously localizable. Borders are viewed as spatially movable arrangements that are both externalized and networked across society, rather than fixed territorial limits. It displaces time equally within displacing borders. By imposing deadlines on migrants before granting them access, protection, or rights. As they selectively regulate all movement, it distorts the past, present, and future (S. Khosravi and M. Keshavarz, 2020). By adding a temporal dimension to an already spatial border analysis. It is critical to consider time and space in tandem, and how they both work through each other to gain access to and exit a political space. I'd like to explore how temporality and time shape the spatialities of borders by using the example of migrants who travel through these established mechanisms constructed by migration policies.

Governments have stretched their frontiers beyond their borders, migration routes, and the digital sphere. Simultaneous, the number of interior border control spaces has increased. For example, migrant status is increasingly being policed in workplaces and other public areas. Thus, access to a region no longer equates to inclusion in a political arena. Instead, crossing a physical territorial border is just one of an endless amount of travels that cross and inscribe the limits of civil/uncivil, safe/dangerous, legitimate traveler/illegal migrant, (Amoore, 2006).

The "smart" border and growing use of risk management technologies like biometrics, radio frequency identification, and data mining have complicated the interaction of internal and external border spaces. Showing that these technologies have effectively made human beings, into carriers of the borders. In between the inside and outside of the spatial arrangement of this physical border (Van der Ploeg, 2003) The information needed to enforce borders is carried in bodies, legal status, identity, and degree of risk that a person represents, border control is no longer limited to specific points of entry into nation-state territories, but will be carried out wherever bodies of 'risk' appear, both within and beyond state borders.

Contemporary border practices call into question the traditional relationship between territory, border, and state. By combining the outside and inside spaces in borders. The topological image of the Möbius strip, for example, has been invoked to account for how contemporary bordering practices contest conventional understandings of the relationship between border, state, and territory (Cockayne, D.G., Ruez, D. and Secor, A.J., 2019). Making it difficult for migrants to comprehend whether they are in or out of the political space. Externalization and internalization are less about the spatiality of the border, and the movement of border force outwards across a flat surface, and more concerned with relationships that allow governments to use their authority and have it reach into other states' territories. What makes defining a border incredibly difficult, when not being able to tell its edges. However, the changing shape of borders is not limited to space. Furthermore, states rely on time and temporality in cross-border regulation.

Borders were constructed to control the pace of mobility and, in the case of most migrants, to prevent mobility and migration. Pampadopoulos, Tsianos and Stephenson (2008) argue in their book *Escape Routes* that the purpose of these detention centers, which are mostly located on the outskirts of Europe, is not to stop migration. However, to impose temporal control on trans migrant movements. Regulating mobility by suspending time and regulating (labor) migration and asylum seekers through time rather than space. In addition, how states use to slowdown migratory movements. The temporal ambiguity of the migratory process, in which periods of waiting and feeling stuck are punctuated by moments of accelerated identification and selection processes. According to Saulo B. Cwerner (2004), the UK's immigration policy strategy has been, to speed up the asylum process through new legislation and administrative procedures. Where asylum seekers have to rely on expedited identification procedures and a detention infrastructure. At the same time, incarceration is being used to control and slow down migration. Creating moments when these times and spaces begin to converge. This determines whether they will be allowed to enter Europe and the United Kingdom within hours of their arrival. Making time a very powerful tool.

The concept of time and space, as well as how it socially and culturally, continues to unfold within that space, has long been a concern in human geography. Human activities are influenced by spatial and temporal limitations, where time and space act as resources that people must navigate time in order to realize their objectives. Because of technological advancements, it has altered our perception of proximity, for instance, the invention of the telephone, vehicle, aircraft, etc, has made it possible to be in more places faster (Kern, 1983). Time is not linear, and neither space nor surface is absolute. Distances between places are synchronously expanding and shrinking as where time is synchronously slowing down and speeding up (May and Thrift, 2001). Putting these linear concepts of time to the test. By fragmenting time, we complicate what is accessible and what is not, what is within reach and what is not. Time and space distort access to cross borders and the inside spaces of borders. For example, biometric borders allow territories to pre-vet and screen who can enter the border, screening legal documents, work status, and previous residency. Moving it forward in time, you move the border further into time too. These borders are being transcended through time and space to halt people from crossing. Placing migrants in paradoxical spaces.

Time and temporality shape what it means to enter and exit political border spaces. Migrants are given different access to internal border spaces and international mobility. Time and space are intertwined in the creation of such differing access. Contemporary borders are devices that selectively increase the distance between internal and external spaces by changing the rate of migration movement. Compressing distances between countries of origin and destination by accelerating the movements of migrants. By allowing immediate access to entering the internal border space and extending that internal/external border space, they almost start to merge. By creating discontinuities through time, and pushing the internal spaces of borders so far into the future, it starts to look like they are placed far beyond reach.

References

- Amoore, L. (2006). Biometric borders: Governing mobilities in the war on terror. *Political Geography*, 25(3), pp.336–351. doi:10.1016/j.polgeo.2006.02.001.
- Axelsson, L. (2022). Border timespaces: understanding the regulation of international mobility and migration. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 104(1), pp.59–74. doi:10.1080/04353684.2022.2027260.
- Cockayne, D.G., Ruez, D. and Secor, A.J. (2019). Thinking space differently: Deleuze's Möbius topology for a theorisation of the encounter. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 45(1), pp.194–207. doi:10.1111/tran.12311.
- Cwerner, S.B. (2004). Faster, Faster and Faster. *Time & Society*, [online] 13(1), pp.71–88. doi:10.1177/0961463x04040747.
- Kern, S. (1983). *The Culture of Time and Space 1880–1918*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- May, J., and N. J. Thrift. (2001). *Timespace: Geographies of Temporality*. London: Routledge
- Nicholas De Genova (2017). *The borders of 'Europe' : autonomy of migration, tactics of bordering*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Papadopoulos, D., N. Stephenson, and V. Tsianos (2008). *Escape Routes: Control and Subversion in the Twenty-First Century*. London: Pluto.
- S. Khosravi and M. Keshavarz (2020). *www.e-flux.com*. (n.d.).The Magic of Borders - Architecture - e-flux. [online] Available at: <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/at-the-border/325755/the-magic-of-borders/>.
- Van der Ploeg, I. (2003). Biometrics and the Body as information: Normative Issues of the Socio-Technical coding of the body. In *surveillance as social sorting: privacy, risk, and digital discrimination*, pp. 57-73.
- Wilkenfeld, Y. (2022). The EU's endemic migration crisis. [online] GIS Reports. Available at: <https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/eu-migration-crisis/>.