

BORDERING, ORDERING AND OTHERING

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INTRODUCTION

In 1988, geographer David Sibley argued in his thought-provoking article on the purification of space that 'there has been a failure to recognise boundary maintenance and the rejection of difference as something which is central to geography' (1988, p. 410). Now, more than a decade later, it is almost a truism to say that the symbolisation and (discursive) institutionalisation of differences in space have gained central attention in present so-called critical geography debates. Forwarded mainly by post-structural and post-colonial theorisations, the post-modern concern with difference has almost become, as Jacobs (2000) argues, a shibboleth in human geography. Representing good political correctness for some and a form of unwanted celebration of subjectivity and hyper relativity for others, the usage and exploitation of the term 'difference' has become a differential principle itself among those who claim or believe themselves to be critical geographers and those who claim or believe themselves to be mainstream.

Despite such agonistic tendencies, we believe the interesting and stimulating debate on difference has put the spotlight on relevant issues. The exclusionary consequences of the securing and governing of the 'own' economic welfare and identity has gained a more central and just place in the geographical debate. It is this topic that we define as bordering, which we relate to practices of othering, that is a

central theme in this special issue. In particular, the practices of ordering and the discursive differentiation between us and them, seen through the lens of spatial bordering, are topics of interest here. Which are our contemporary bordering and ordering spatial routines and practices that seem to prevail daily praxis? Special attention is drawn to the awareness and perception of migrant others in our bordering discourses and practices. The challenging and sometimes horrifying reality of present territorial processes demands our constant critical awareness and attendance of processes of (b)ordering and othering, which have gained only more relevance in the light of current geo-political developments following the 11 September 2001 attack in the USA.

The purpose of this special issue of *TESG* is to contribute to the geographical debate on (b)ordering and othering processes, focusing in particular on the issue of (im)mobility. A selection is offered of promising theoretical insights from various geographical contributors to the debate, drawing from spatially diverse actual cases. This introductory paper to the theme explores the concepts thought to be most significant in the debate on (b)ordering and othering, some elements of which are examined in more detail by the contributors to the issue. This paper begins by discussing the issue of bordering through immobilising people. This is followed by a debate on the making of places for economic or political strangers, the transnational places.

(B)ORDERING MOBILITY

Bordering processes do not begin or stop at demarcation lines in space. Borders do not represent a fixed point in space or time, rather they symbolise a social practice of spatial differentiation. Semantically, the word 'borders' unjustly assumes that places are fixed in space and time, and should rather be understood in terms of bordering, as an ongoing strategic effort to make a difference in space among the movements of people, money or products. In democratic societies borders are not 'made from above', rather they represent an implicit, often taken-for-granted, agreement among the majority of people. Put differently, territorial borders continuously fixate and regulate mobility of flows and thereby construct or reproduce places in space.

Territorial strategies of ordering, bordering and othering often take place, although certainly not necessarily, at the spatial scale of states. For example, Sanjay Chaturvedi's paper in this issue, exemplifies the discourses and strategies practised between India and Pakistan, where practices of inclusion and exclusion are framed by nation-building projects of the two countries, discursively uttered through differences in religion. He demonstrates how on both sides of the border national education programmes reproduce and reinforce otherness. Spaan *et al.* (this issue) focus on the borders between Malaysia and Indonesia. Recently, although not comparable in intensity to the case of India and Pakistan, tensions have increased in association with the redefining of Malay identity and massive immigration of Indonesians to Malaysia. Knippenberg (this issue) shows that practices of othering and cultural fragmentation are not merely practices of interstate affairs, but also take place within states. He argues that a state territory hardly ever covers a homogeneous population, yet it claims to represent and imagine one. In this claiming and producing of a unity out of subcultures and different populations, some groups are (voluntarily) assimilated while others are or remain marginalised as semi-aliens. Such bordering processes sometimes go as far as political practices of elimination, of the

cleansing of the other that lives inside an imagined community.

The making of a place must hence be understood as an act of purification, as it is arbitrarily searching for a justifiable, bounded cohesion of people and their activities in space which can be compared and contrasted to other spatial entities. It can be seen as a spatial *strategy* (de Certeau 1980). According to de Certeau a strategy presupposes a place that can be circumscribed as one's *own* (*un propre*), and that can serve as the base from which to direct relations with an *exteriority* consisting of targets or threats such as clients, competitors, enemies and strangers. What territorial human strategy does is classify space, communicate a sense of place and enforce control over a place (Sack 1986). In doing so, territorial strategy reifies power, displaces others, and depersonalises, neutralises, fills and contains space (Sack 1986).

The paradox of borders – (B)ordering rejects as well as erects othering. This paradoxical character of bordering processes whereby borders are erected to erase territorial ambiguity and ambivalent identities in order to shape a unique and cohesive order, but thereby create new or reproduce latently existing differences in space and identity – is of much importance in understanding our daily contemporary practices (Van Houtum & Legendijk 2001). Take, for instance, the dramatic case of the Afghan boat refugees on the shores of Australia, who were refused entrance by Australian authorities. After a long political struggle the refugees were partly transferred by Australia to the small neighbouring Pacific island of Nauru and partly handed over to New Zealand, which had volunteered to host some of them. There is reason to believe that the Afghans intended to ask for refugee status in order to flee from the Taliban regime in their home country. As a kind of salvation Australia decided to subsidise the island of Nauru in its attempts to give shelter to the Afghan refugees. It could be argued that the long-term process of making an Australian nation with a distinct national identity (a form of integration as well as differentiation in itself) coincides with the making of a stronger anti-immigration policy. What

made the rejection of these others particularly painful is that it took place at a time when the first international conference against racism and xenophobia was held (in Durham, South Africa). Apparently, the construction of an Australian nation, which is still looking for a functional balance between isolation from and attachment to both Europe and Asia, has created a territorial order that makes a difference in space. The making of a unique, exclusive place goes hand in hand with governing practices of exclusion and purification. Exclusivity of a territory is always Janus-faced.

The case of Australia does not stand alone, rather, it may be seen as a fitting illustration of the harshening contemporary migration policy in present capitalist societies. As a result, we have been witnessing some dramatic peaks in the consequences of this trend in the last few years, such as the case of the Chinese immigrants found dead in the back of a truck entering Dover in Britain and the dangerous cat and mouse chase between British authorities and refugees trying to escape through the Channel tunnel from France.

'Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost, to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door' wrote Emma Lazarus in her beautiful poem, 'The New Colossus' of 1883. These words are engraved on the most famous symbol of immigration, the Statue of Liberty in New York. They enlightened and inspired normative viewpoints on immigration policies of many societies around the world for a long time, but are now becoming a softening echo of a faraway past. Lady Liberty's cry for freedom with lips silent and eyes mild, this Mother of Exiles, with her welcoming light for those searching for a better home, has gradually become a topic of much heroic romanticism, rather than actual practice. When it comes to migration, there is no government in this world that brings the much celebrated rhetoric of a borderless world into actual practice (see Hiebert; Spaan *et al.*, this issue).

It is worrying that the recent shocking, horrific attacks in New York and Washington have also been used as new inputs on the justification and legitimisation of border con-

trol on cross-national mobility in various countries around the world. Through the attacks, and not much helped by the bothersome rhetorical ideological identity politics of the so-called 'free world', the purification of 'unwanted elements', the stereo-typical construction of strangers in our societies has been given a new negative upswing.

In this respect, the words of Castles and Miller couldn't be more timely:

International migration is a constant, not an aberration, in human history. Population movements have always accompanied demographic growth, technological change, political conflict and warfare. Over the last five centuries mass migrations have played a major role in colonialism, industrialization, the emergence of nation-states and the development of the capitalist world market. However, international migration has never been as pervasive, or as socio-economically and politically significant, as it is today. Never before have statesmen accorded such priority to migration concerns. Never before has international migration seemed so pertinent to national security and so connected to conflict and disorder on a global scale (1993, p. 283).

Adverse selection of access – In the aftermath of the post-modern and post-colonial age the boundaries between what is one's place and what is the place of another, and where a rightful boundary can be drawn between the self and the other, between home and away, between good and evil, between the known and the unknown have become arguably blurred. However, the many post-modern celebrations on and calls for heterotopia, involving the rejection of an order of sameness and repetition and the acknowledgement of ambivalences and differences, have not led to a reduction of claims on space and spatial fixations. On the contrary, the acknowledgement of the disruption and fragmentation of ideologies and grand narratives may well have invoked a further spatial securing of one's wealth, identity and safety, and the adverse selection of access. Higher mobility of information, capital and people that characterise contemporary post-modern society according

to authors like Bauman (1998, 2000), Smith (2000) and Urry (2000) make a bounded society increasingly porous and untenable, and paradoxically have led to a commercial restrengthening of the claiming of space.

In a presumably more liquid society, territorial borders are still used as key strategies to objectify space. It is implicitly argued that the territorial demarcation of differences that borders provide assures a geographical ordering of presumably governable spatial units. The resulting categorisation and classification of places in space allows mappable comparison of differences in spatial institutionalisation, naming, identifying and performance. Politically and economically this comparison function of borders is played out rigorously in present post-modern performance games. All spatial units claim to own unique qualities and assets and those that lack cultural or historical legacies creatively invent them. There is an increase in the need felt to protect what is imagined as one's own cultural legacy and economic welfare, which in turn has again invited people to 'discover' or 'taste' more of these self-claimed and protected 'treasures'. Attracting beneficial foreign economic resources, securing safety and preventing abundant immigration are defined as the most prominent border tasks by governments nowadays.

Within the territorial strategy that is dominant in present capitalist societies the speed, flexibility and frictionless movement of money sharply contrasts with the movement of people without meaningful economic resources. It is the utopian dream of an ordered, consistent and stabilised unity that implicitly asks for a non-stop monitoring of control of access and a close examination of those entering. Complete closure and complete openness of the borders are generally seen as extremes on an imagined border continuum, of which the degree of openness dominates liberal economic debates and the degree of closure dominates the debate on the immigration of refugees.

The adverse selective managerial policy towards the openness of borders has been invoked over the past decades, not dimmed. There is a heightened and more competitive praxis of selection of people at the borders of societies, largely based on the capitalisation of

their resources. Some countries literally work with a system of credit points for the most desirable praxis of immigrants (Hiebert, this issue). The adverse selective managerial policy involves the tracing, selecting and attracting of people that are believed to be beneficial for the growth of their own economy: the skilled (ICT, nurses, etc.), touristic and entrepreneurial strangers. Within the EU, for example, many governments acknowledge that there is a growing need for more skilled immigrant workers to maintain or improve the level of welfare in the near future. This includes those people that are believed to add value to the imagined community, such as soccer players, academics or artists. Together, these welcomed economic resources are discursively often labelled as foreign capital, and include tourism, foreign direct investments, and entrepreneurial and labour forces (often denoted as human *capital*). Local pride accompanies the welcoming of economically valuable strangers. Such international migration has become a major worldwide political issue, particularly in the richer countries. The competitive race in attracting these external money-makers has increased considerably over the past few decades.

The increased economic liberalisation of political borders is what Zizek (1998) calls a form of post-politics, in which economics is depoliticised and politics is economised. Ideological conflicts have been replaced by what in the Dutch idiom has been called a 'poldermodel' entrepreneurial way of doing politics. In such post-politics, efforts of co-operation and consensus-building lean heavily on the status quo of the neutralised and taken-for-granted liberate economic climate.

This liberalisation and cross-border integration that characterises the process of globalisation, and which is deliberately sought for in the EU, coincides with a seemingly relentless reproduction of mythically imagined borders of the past and scalar fixations of borders of solidarity. Mobility and fixating seem to go hand in hand, and often in a self-reproducing continuous cycle. In the words of Rodriguez (1999): 'The global landscape in the late 20th century presents a dramatic socio-geographical picture: the movement across world regions of billions of capital investment dollars and of

millions of people, and concerted attempts to facilitate the former and restrict the latter.' In the post-modern performance game between places, others are welcome, but some others are more welcome than other others. An important feature of current bordering practices towards strangers is the practice of counting (Hyndman 2000, p. 183). Strangers increasingly become 'objects of headcounts', as if there is literally a social demand for accountability of government efforts. An important difference, however, between the grammar practices of spatially bounded entities is that in the case of incoming skilled immigrants and especially entrepreneurs their number is seen as a testimony of a successful campaign, whereas the number of refugees is often seen as the social solidarity that is tested.

Hyndman argues that geographers analysing migration and its sites of struggle should be more attentive to a critical understanding of the dynamic and complex connections between money, power and space. It is this attentive awareness that we in this issue take up and elaborate further through the lens of bordering and othering practices. We would argue that it is through and at borders that the specific character of the rigidity and openness of the governance of places becomes most clearly manifested. And it is at borders where normative values of differential social systems meet. Borders function as spatial mediators of often latent power and governance discourses and practices of places in society. Borders thereby intrinsically and ineluctably represent the governing and preserving of values. Borders can be seen as the testing grounds of our present economic order (Sassen, 1999).

Mobility and fixating – International mobility of people in particular makes the rigidity of the governance of these bordered often latent principles concretely visible. Selective openness creates a tension between human rights as we have defined them and the protection of sovereignty (Sassen 1999). Already the mere existence of people moving around without a passport complicates the latter. Also illegal immigrants working in the informal economy, the undocumented workers in major cities in capitalist societies, directly disrupt the securing and tenure of state sovereignty. There is a

universal right to leave one's country institutionalised in the treaty of refugees of 1951 at the convention of Geneva, yet there is no universal right to be given asylum (Sassen 1999). This juridical gap gives room to and justifies the social production of *spaces of difference and indifference*. That what is beyond the self-defined differentiating border of comfort (*difference*) is socially made legitimate to be neglected (*indifference*) (Van Houtum 2001). It is only when the socially 'dirtified' people, the 'Heimatlosen', the 'displaced persons', the illegal immigrants, the people without papers and/or economic resources, knock at the doors of our societies that the manifestation of the often covert and taken-for-granted principles of bordering is directly asked for.

The wish to control for the fear of loss of comfort and potential conflict of identity obstructs an unconditional mobility of people. What is more, the seemingly unavoidable conservative tendency to hold on to familiarity and certainty and protect economic easiness even obstructs an open debate on the opening of borders. It is undebated and undecided what really would happen when borders would indeed be opened unconditionally. Notwithstanding that political incorrectness is one of the post-modern taboos of our time, contesting and challenging our self-defined and self-produced territorial borders remains a covert, sundered topic. Apparently, post-modern discourse on the deconstruction of spatial fixations and orderings is hard to put into practice.

Bifurcation – The tension between the economic immigrants that are invited to reduce a labour market deficit or that have added value in another sense and the immigrants seeking (economic or political) asylum is rising. Especially, the arbitrary and abstract difference that is currently upheld between economic and political asylum seekers is an aspect that has invoked much debate. It is generally acknowledged in literature that it is extremely difficult to trace and categorise the many and different motivations and apparent needs for people to migrate. In general, asylum-seekers are seeking to improve their means in order to cope with their perceived uncertainty,

insecurity or standards of living. It seems an impossible task to maintain a binary policy distinction of the kind in 'in vs. out' or 'allowance vs. refusal' based upon such a complexity of needs and motivations. It leads to an odd split in international governance of migrating flows.

Strikingly, the divergence in border governance between immigrant workers and other immigrants is expressed in a bifurcation of political policy of national governments as well. The attraction of foreign economic resources and the immigration policy are categorised as belonging to different fields of political attention, mostly ministry of economic affairs versus ministry of justice or internal affairs.

The empowerment of such simplistic binary categorisation of allowance vs. refusal intrinsically produces a cat and mouse game between border patrol and immigrants, such as takes place at the border between the USA and Mexico, and which increasingly can also be seen at the borders of Spain and Italy. The running through the Channel tunnel as mentioned above is another example of the product of such a border game. Such bifurcated politics of purification is often rhetorically empowered, as in the case of Malaysian policy for instance, where a 'get rid of operation' has been launched (Spaan *et al.*, this issue).

A binary categorisation of this kind gratifies stories of immigrants that fit into a template narrative of admittance. The art and specific contents of the story are made into justifying evidence and are therefore liable to manipulation. Obviously, what is produced as a template for admission will eventually be reproduced by those who wish to enter, thereby making the arbitrary line between economical and political asylum even thinner. Furthermore, it eventually produces *gens sans papiers*, since migrating without a passport increases the chance of getting political asylum. The tension, as described above, between economic immigrants that are explicitly sought for and invited to reduce deficits on the own labour market and economic asylum-seekers that are refused entry because they are not political refugees questions the confusing and agonising distinction between economic and political asylum even further.

TRANSNATIONAL BORDERING OF SPACES

Bordering practices are not confined to (inner)state spaces, as argued above. In a transnational sense bordered places are produced and reproduced as well, leading to transnational places of refuge. The increasing mobility of people who cross national borders are at the base of the proliferation of such transnational spaces, as Chambers makes clear:

Travel, migration and movement invariably bring us against the limits of our inheritance. We may choose to withdraw from this impact and only select a confirmation of our initial views... We could, however, ... respond to the challenge of a world that is more extensive than the one we have been accustomed to inhabiting (1994, p. 115).

Particularly migrants who, in search for income opportunities and/or better political environments, depart from familiar territories to explore other, strange territories, have challenged the notion that there is 'an immutable link between places and culture/peoples and identity', since now 'the savage is no longer out there but has invaded home' (Lavie & Swedenburg 1996, pp. 1-2).

Characteristic of the transnational spatial embedding, and a fitting illustration of the split in political governance between strangers, is the creation of differential spaces in society for each of them. Displacement as well as othering is a two-way process. From the perspective of the receiving country, the actual placement of strangers is often conceived of as a threat to nationally cohesively ordered space and identity, since the other is now inside, resulting in places of diaspora, of cultures in-between, of hybrid and of border-culture (Chambers 1994; Lavie & Swedenburg 1996; Watson 1975). Often, processes of adaptation and re-assertion will be expressed in various spatial patterns of displacement within the country of settlement. From the perspective of the newcomers, and for those who may feel to be perceived as such, the clustering together in space may represent welcome familiarity and recognition, a shield of emotional protection against the new

strange society they entered. Below, a distinction is made between the displacing of four different kinds of strangers: foreign entrepreneurs/managers, refugees/asylum seekers, tourists and low-rated immigrant workers.

Business districts – Foreign entrepreneurs or managers of large international firms generally operate in a national business society, and in the present post-industrial landscape are typically accommodated in urban business districts or parks. The dominant image of a business district is an atmosphere appropriate to the function of its majority of residents: businesses. It is an atmosphere dominated by a sense of speed, technology, calculation, order, profits, status and precision (Sennet 1992). A business district is generally perceived as a place of power, symbolised in the beautifying, sky-daring and inviting architectural setting, yet politically neutral (Sassen 1999).

Refugee-borderings – Refugee camps and asylum-centres mark out a transnational landscape in a strikingly different way. Present bordering and differentiating practices concerning immigration of refugees, asylum-seekers and semi-permanent wanderers like gypsies spatially represent feelings of emotional distance and praxis of indifference. At the edges of cities or a country, or filling old urban holes in space, these places quite literally are considered as the borderlands of a society. Quite the opposite of a business district, here the image of disorder, loss, tiredness, and tardiness prevails. It is seen as a gathering of the powerless, the marginalised and politically contested, architecturally symbolised by the inhabitation of out of use places and buildings or tents. These are, as Hyndman argues, 'the noncommunities of the excluded' (2000, p. 183). Here the borders between 'their zone and ours' is expressed in terms of those who wait and those who participate. If there is such a distinction between spaces of fear and hope on the one hand and spaces of belonging and formality on the other, then those who wait are arguably more on the former side.

Touristic refuges – Transnational practices of bordering can also be found when it concerns the placement of larger groups of tourists.¹

Places in fashion are turned into enclaves of tourists that all are looking for the same kind of entertainment. These are society's spotlight places, occupied by the bright, the happy, the shining. It produces a temporary or semi-permanent transnational migration of people, which all follow the narrow and predetermined alleys of glittering enjoyment. There is a place of enjoyment for everyone, be it sun-and-sea lovers, nature trail lovers or amateur archaeologists. It leads to the packing and clustering together of the same kind of people in pre-structured, standardised enclaves of fashion. The dominant atmosphere is one of excitement, trendhopping, image-making, richness and ignorance. The will and chance to see beyond the brochure in these places, the *Rough Guide* or *Lonely Planet* is slimmer than the will and chance to see the same people twice. Such Disneyfication of places, as it is sometimes referred to, is strictly bordered to certain paths, places, even streets. Beyond what is fashionable, what is hip to bring home as a narrative, hardly anybody goes. In this always-moving global train of fashionable destinations no place containing some attraction of some kind is left untouched.

Placing labour migrants – The last distinguished category here is the displacement of permanent migrants who have obtained the nationality of the country where they have settled. These include the guest workers, working in industries or those owning small firms, and their families, as well as former political migrants who received citizenship status. Politically marked as a category of others, they are denoted as newcomers, allochthonous or first, second or third-generation immigrants. Spatially often clustered in ethnic urban neighbourhoods, for them, maybe more than for other strangers, the issue of social identity is of crucial importance. These are not the global elite travellers, wanderers in space or the waiting people, but are here and here to stay. Spatial expressions of multi-cultural societies of this kind sometimes develop into 'ethnic enclaves' of which the Franco-Maghrebi suburbs of Greater Paris and the afro-american and hispano-american neighbourhoods in New York are well-known examples.

During the transition in status from temporary to permanent migrant a process of identity formation takes place with a strong spatial dimension. If anything, they wander in identification. The migrant arrives with an already multiple-layered identity, which most of the time is predominantly framed into one of being member of a nation-state or nation. It could well be that the migrant is not aware of the dominance of a national identity, but they will soon discover that, for the time being, it will be their only anchor in the unknown sea of the foreign environment that identifies them as a stranger, the other. They can be perceived by the native-borns as competition in the labour market, or even as an enemy within (Bauman 2000). In the *Satanic Verses* Rushdie (1988) pictured the immigrant as a person that is transformed in and by the strangers in the new and strange society as a strange creature, as if wearing horns, a tail and cloven hooves. Finding meaning and trust in the society they (now) inhabit are crucial elements in the attempt to reshape their identity and means to survive. How the self-reproducing cycle of indifferent coldness of the new home is often embedded in socially displaced people is most eloquently and famously epitomised in Camus' *L'étranger* (1994). Here Camus' philosophical morality that apart from one's own conscious being, all else is otherness, from which one is estranged, is powerfully narrated. The main character in his story, Meursault, lives and ends his life as an indifferent stranger, an outsider, one who is at constant odds and deepening alienation with what he perceives as an absurd society he inhabits.

Reinscribing identity – One's social identity is a product of the social relations one is embedded in (Van Houtum & Lagendijk 2001). Identities must be understood as social processes of continuous 're-writing' of the self and of social collectives (Paasi, this issue). Since it is difficult to change or radically break with one's social relations, it is hard to change or leave behind one's identity when migrating from one place to another. In the preface to her book on a Bangladeshi village, where many inhabitants have migrated to, Gardner (1995, p. ii) characterises the integration pro-

cess as: 'those who step across cultural and geographical boundaries are, in varying degrees, likely to find themselves transformed. As we physically move, so do our personal and social boundaries shift; in this sense, migration involves a constant process of re-invention and self re-definition.' The latter, we are inclined to say, concerns every individual since we are always becoming. We are strangers to ourselves, as Kristeva (1991) poetically has argued. Migrating transnationally, however, is generally seen as one of the most dramatic identity alterations in the consistent fluctuation of 'home' and personal identity.

For the transnational migrant it is not only the time change but also the place change that needs to be explored and dealt with. In terms of the latter, they might assimilate into the new environment; adapt to the new circumstances; or re-assert their original identity or, perhaps, to the one that is given to them (Todd 1994). In all cases, the process of giving meaning to their new world implies constant negotiations with the new social environment as well as with their former or other social environment (Watson 1975; Mandel 1990; Gross *et al.* 1996; Knippenberg, this issue).

In her captivating novel *Jasmine*, Bharati Mukherjee eschews the binary trap of bordered from within and bordered from outside. The main character in the book, a young woman born in India, emigrates illegally to the USA after her husband is killed by members of a Hindu cult. Entering the USA she experiences another dramatic and violent experience, she is raped. On that first night in the USA she murders her rapist and thereby symbolically 'murders' who she was. In her sequential quest for identity in an alien land she moves further towards assimilation whereby pieces of her past are gradually fleeing. She feels her personality is continuously changing, as she shuttles back and forth between these binary positions of insider out and outsider in. Her identity is always in a flux of dislocation and relocation, always liquid, never fixed. She phantoms her way through identities. As John K. Hoppe (1999) noted in a review, 'Jasmine's postcolonial, ethnic characters are post-American, carving out new spaces for themselves from among a constellation of available cultural narratives, never remaining bound by

any one, and always fluidly negotiating the boundaries of their past, present, and futures.' The celebration of fluid identities in this impressive novel very much resembles present arguments on liquid modernity (Bauman 2000) and mobile society (Urry 2000). The phantomisation of the personal identity of Jasmine already started, as she realises herself, on her way to the USA:

There is a shadow world of aircraft permanently aloft that share air lanes and radio frequencies with Pan Am and British Air and Air-India, portaging people who coexist with tourists and businessmen. But we are refugees and mercenaries and guest workers, you see us sleeping in airport lounges, you watch us unwrapping the last of our native foods, unrolling our prayer rugs, reading our holy books, taking out for the hundredth time an aerogram promising a job or space to sleep, a newspaper in our language, a photo of happier times, a passport, a visa, a *laissez-passer*... We ask only one thing: to be allowed to land; to pass through; to continue... What country? What continent? We pass through wars, through plagues. I am hungry for news, but the discarded papers are in characters or languages I cannot read. The zigzag route is the straightest. I phantom my way through three continents (pp. 100–101).

It is this phantomisation, this elimination of a fixed identity, and the necessity to undergo a process of social and often violent marginalisation, which is key in this novel and may help to understand the identity struggle of immigrants in general. In the words of Hoppe: 'Jasmine and her fellow travellers are "ghosts," unthinkable and diaphanous entities taking advantage of the liminal, unauthorized and interstitial spaces that are the inevitable possibilities – the remainders, the excesses – of those pathways hurled outward to draw global Others into the sphere of power of the modern West.'

Memorising places – In the quest for re-identification for most immigrants, the imaginative power of a native-born nation or a region on one's social identity often remains remarkably strong. This is made abundantly

clear in Ramdas (2000). In this account of ten immigrants in Rotterdam originating from ten different countries, Ramdas notices that the mountains of Morocco, the ports of Hong Kong and the village streets of the Surinam countryside play a larger role in the stories of the immigrants than the streets and squares of Rotterdam. One of these stories refers to Dutch second-generation Italians who each year return for a vacation to the village where their parents were born. In due course, the village has been reshaped into a dead village most of the year, and an active place during summer. Similar accounts are known from villages in the Rif region (Morocco) and Turkey.

Ramdas' stories tie in to the argument made by Tilly (1990), Sassen (1999) and others that despite path-breaking travels as narrated by Bharati Mukherjee, it is usually not individuals that migrate, but networks of people. This is referred to by Tilly as the transplantation of networks (Tilly 1990). It is precisely because of this networking that we call international immigrants 'transnationals' (Faist 2000; Smith 2001). 'Social networks of transnational migrants comprise one of the key circuits of communicative action connecting localities beyond borders and constituting translocal ties across the globe' (Smith 2001, p. 4).

Whatever their status – assimilated, adapted, rejected or re-asserted – foreign labour migrants as well as foreign entrepreneurs individually or as a group will usually maintain relationships/linkages with the place of origin (village, city, region, country). In other words, transnationals will link two places with each other, through remigration of remittances, so that actions in one place will affect actions in the other and vice versa. Social transformation processes therefore not only occur in the places of destination but also in the places of origin (Gardner 1995; Weyland 1993). Remittances are often used by family members to build houses and to start business in the (original) home country. In countries with a substantial out-migration, as diverse as Mexico, Turkey, Morocco and the Philippines, parts of the urban slum areas and many villages are being renewed due to remittances of both temporary and permanent migrants.

As Sassen (1999) argues, such transnational networks form a typical pattern in these forms of migration, providing a clear relation between economic and political impacts of migration, and making the bifurcated governance of migration problematic. The destination of migrants can usually be traced back to economic or political restructuring efforts, e.g. migrants from a former colony or from a country where people were or are presently hired as guest workers. It is because of such maintained relations and memories that *chain-migration* takes place. This chain-migration has an impact not only on the restructuring and re-territorialisation of space of the settlement countries, but also on the countries of origin, through the networks of remigration or remittances as explained above. Migration is therefore not a responsibility for the individual migrant alone (Sassen 1999). The receiving country has an important active role to play as well. Migration is not just an issue of solidarity, but also of responsibility. It is in this inter-linked pattern of mutually influencing places that the transnational character of present mobility finds its clearest spatial expression.

CONCLUSION

In this introductory paper we have navigated our way through much contested political and academic cliffs in the present geographical landscape of difference, such as practices of bordering, identifying, migration politics, assimilation and transnational segregation. In our examination of current spatial practices of eliminating and making differences, we realise we have questioned more than solved these hot political issues. By critically choosing and highlighting specific issues, we yet hope to have structured possible items on the research agenda on the relationship between territorial processes bordering, ordering and othering. We have argued that these processes are intrinsically territorial and are always guided by normatively debatable decision-making processes. It is this juxtaposition of territory and morality that we have addressed and highlighted in this paper.

Making others through the territorial fixing of order, is intrinsically connected to our present image of borders. Others are both

necessary, constitutive for the formation of borders, as well as the implication of the process of forming these borders. Others are needed and therefore constantly produced and reproduced to maintain the cohesion in the formatted order of a territorially demarcated society. Obviously, the world is not a grid. People transgress the borders of such an imagined grid everyday. Mobility has become a buzzword to denote the power of such border transgressions in daily life. Yet, the belief in and hope for a spatially structured society is part of the realisation of the grid-world. In the competition of dreams of and imagination between a (b)orderless world and a (b)orderly world the latter proves to be very powerful and resistant. Even state border transgressing human practices are often spatially embedded and given a place, as we have seen above in the discussion on transnational places. It seems that the certainty, comfort, identity and security that a territorial order might render are given higher value over a world of a non-territorial order.

At the same time, Bauman (1995) reminds us, in a thought-provoking text on strangers, that a bordered space such as a city would be long dead if it didn't offer some kind of excitement and pleasure just because of the unfamiliarity and uncertainty of the living together with strangers in the streets of the place. He argues that it is not in spite of, but thanks to the universal otherhood present in places that places are still with us: 'it is thanks to the preservation of the strangeness of the strangers, freezing the distance, preventing proximity; pleasure is drawn precisely from mutual estrangement, that is from the absence of responsibility' (p. 132). The sensation of opportunity and freedom associated with living together with strangers in a place mainly comes from the relatively anonymous and non-committal relations that dominate life in major city streets. It is a morally self-conscious and self-limiting act to look no further than the surface of others in the public sphere of the place (Bauman 1995). In this respect, the territorial order of the public sphere is amoral. 'The city street is simultaneously exciting and frightening; apparently, through reducing the self to a surface, to something that one can control and arrange at will,

it offers the self security against intruder' (Bauman 1995, p. 135).

Life would, however, be unbearable in the long run, Bauman warns, if there were not an imagined place where the *whole self*, the self beyond the street-wise surface, can come to rest, where there is room for morally open and complete relationships in which proximity is searched for, no distance is kept, where responsibility is needed and wanted, in short, a home. Bauman therefore argues that what we conventionally do is make a distinction between the strangers in a place from the strangers outside (*at portas*) our territorially formatted and/or perceived order. The strangers in the 'own' territorial order are part of Anderson's imagined community (1983), in which the unknown is imagined to be part of the whole and therefore included. The amoral indifference versus the other in this imagined community is a functional street-wise neglect which might render excitement, pleasure and is often subject to a commercially orchestrated aestheticism and *flânerisme*. The continuously reproduced strangers *at portas* on the contrary, are the strangers at the borders of territorially demarcated societies, such as the EU, states, regions or cities. In this case, the amoral, taken-for-granted space of indifference is functional for the cohesion and order of the imagined community, yet, as we have argued above, directly limits the freedom of choice for the other.

(B)ordering processes involve a contested and contextual quest for the freedom we allow for others and the doubt and uncertainty we allow for ourselves, a praxis which Derrida referred to as a negotiation between unconditional morality and conditional pragmatism (Derrida, 1998, 2001). Where is the border between pleasure and danger, between opportunity and fear, between the stranger inside and the stranger outside, between real and imagined? If we accept that spatial morality is intrinsically ambivalent and acknowledge that otherhood and strangeness is mutual, which border then is a just border? Is it at all possible then to negotiate and justify a separation in space? It is to this (re)search agenda that we hope to contribute by critically following and analysing different practices of bordering, ordering and othering.

Note

1. Some argue that the academic travel circus for conferences fits into this image as well (e.g. Bauman, 1995).

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