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# A Companion to Border Studies

Edited by  
Thomas M. Wilson  
and Hastings Donnan

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## CHAPTER 7

# Border Regimes, the Circulation of Violence and the Neo-authoritarian Turn

*John Borneman*

Much has changed in the border regimes of Europe and the Middle East since I began research in Germany in 1982, and in Lebanon and Syria in 1999. Germany is no longer divided into two peoples; many of the borders within Europe, between East and West and North and South, have been radically revised if not dissolved in stunningly peaceful revolutions beginning in November 1989. Lebanon, however, is still divided by sects in borders more culturally and religiously distinct than territorially discrete; its internal borders in the minds of its residents are more tribal than ideological, as in Germany, and because of this Lebanese resist the current changes wrought by larger pan-Arab forces stirring revolt throughout the Middle East, with revolutions already displacing leaders, and perhaps political forms, in Tunisia and Egypt. Yet, even in Lebanon, there has been radical change, when the Israeli Defense Forces unilaterally withdrew in June 2000, after an 18-year occupation, and Syria withdrew its so-called “presence” and troops, including military “checkpoints” throughout the country, in April 2005. And in the middle of these events, not to be neglected for its impact on European and Middle Eastern border regimes, was the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City, 9/11 in 2001, which seemed to crystallize in the Western mind a vision of radical alterity in “political Islam” brewing for centuries, leading to two wars and the stationing of European and American troops in two Muslim countries, Afghanistan and Iraq.

In this essay I wish to move from experiences in my two ethnographic sites to begin to think through these changes and their theoretical and practical import for the understanding of border regimes – the regulation of freedom, security, exchange, and violence – since the Victory of Capitalism. It was that victory, of capitalism, that was certainly not the cause but the condition of possibility for the radical changes in

cultural, territorial, and economic borders in these two disparate yet linked geographical landscapes that I have witnessed in the brief period of 30 years of research. I had read my Marx before I began study, and, raised in the capitalist West, I had been skeptical of his prediction that the logic of capitalism was to do away with all borders between nations and to create a world market, and that the innovative and productive potential of capitalism as a form of exchange would lead to its concentration in the hands of a few and exploitation and immiseration of the vast majority of others.

In my experience of the Cold War, national borders remained strong, and class inequality remained in check, allowing for the creation of a vast consumer-oriented middle class in different parts of the world. Despite the "arms race" with its threat of Mutually Assured Destruction, security and equality were the aspirations and the experience of large populations, at least in the First and Second Worlds.

The fall of the Berlin Wall, in November 1989, opened the way for a change in that regime: suddenly capital began to move quickly and more freely (it had been largely restricted to geographical zones of exchange) not only between East and West Europe (the so-called First and Second Worlds that had been organized against each other into hostile fronts); and there was a radical expansion of exchange between the First (global North) and the Third World (global South). Since that opening, capitalism can claim a victory in the extended free movement of goods, but political liberalism must acknowledge a defeat in the free movement of people. Indeed, two new seemingly unrelated walls, unimaginable in 1989, have since been constructed outside Europe: the Israeli "West Bank barrier," whose construction began in 2003, ostensibly to protect civilians against "Palestinian terrorism," and the United States "border fence" with Mexico, whose construction began in 2007, ostensibly to protect against "illegal movement" coming from Mexico. These new border-walls, rather than the opening of the Berlin Wall, may be more accurate harbingers of our collective futures.

During the Cold War, the liberal, capitalist West had always used the rhetoric of unfreedom to criticize the authoritarian, socialist East, and to this criticism the East had no adequate response. The Soviet Union and its satellite states did claim, plausibly, that socialism needed the protection of territorial boundaries to prevent capital from taking over. Since socialist states heavily subsidized many subsistence goods and "necessities," to allow the free movement of goods from the West would, they said, have caused a collapse of their own systems of production – which did, in fact, occur after the removal of these economic borders. Admittedly, socialist rulers used this economic argument at the level of the system to declare all forms of political critique the products of enemy propaganda, creating large groups of internal "dissidents" whose dissatisfactions, in point of fact, stemmed not from lack of exchange opportunities but lack of political freedoms, including freedom of speech, association and travel (Borneman 1998).

Today these system arguments seem quaint, at best, as current divisions are nowhere structured by the tension between Communist and Capitalist ideologies or systems. Rather, all tensions play out within capitalism, and in the pairing of very similar capitalist principles of economic organization with different political forms. Thus the West posits Chinese "wildcat" capitalism and political authoritarianism as the only competitive systemic alternative to its own market capitalism and liberal-

democratic political form, or it posits as the unreal alternative the specter of capitalism and Islamic theocratic form. However, neither communism nor any other collectivist movement poses a threat, real or imagined, to capitalism as an economic form. Criticisms of the principles of capitalism – profit for profit's sake and the right to contract "freely" one's own labor – are rarely voiced any longer in any political domain. Indeed, this lack of debate and uncritical acceptance of capitalism, even after the near collapse of the world economic system in 2008, suggests a new "captive mind" unwilling or unable to imagine alternatives, what the Polish poet and Nobel Prize winner Czesław Miłosz so perspicaciously criticized in 1953, during the time of Stalin (Miłosz 1981). Miłosz argued that the socialist intelligentsia overidentified with a Communist system that promised freedom but in fact increasingly limited freedoms while claiming it was doing the opposite. Ironically, the Capitalist victory has led to an internalization of the very cognitive form of political acquiescence and self-delusion that contributed to communism's collapse.

What are the major threats to today's border regimes? Since we all – including al Qaeda – operate only within capitalism, these threats must also come from within. We might identify two: first, the circulation of violence which accompanies the accelerated exchanges and movements of people and goods that contemporary capitalism demands; second, the generalization of the model of the corporation with limited liability in which today certain principles of property and ownership are not only not sufficiently checked by political authority, but are able to replace political authority, as its very rationale and precondition. This rationale, in its extreme, legitimates refusing to hold anyone, including corporations, responsible for the production of carbon dioxide and other human-produced pollutants that would seem to threaten global environmental catastrophe. To be sure, borders are being constructed around other kinds of threats also, some seemingly external, but in what follows I will limit my discussion to the circulation of violence and the corporation with limited liability.

## EXTERNAL BORDERS AND INTERNAL LINES

In her stellar work on borders, Mary Douglas points to the relation between external boundaries – thresholds, doorways, crossroads – and the human body and its orifices. Bodily entrances and exits are used to symbolize the external boundaries of social structure, and in ritual the external boundaries of the social are then mapped onto the individual body. Moreover, she argues, there is danger "pressing on external boundaries . . . from transgressing the internal lines . . . [and] in the margins" (1966: 122). I want to take up these external boundaries in their most literal sense, as national borders, and relate them to "internal lines," which Douglas equates with the ambiguity and precariousness internal to group morality.

In the modern world system, group moralities are rarely any longer indigenously reproduced "internal lines" (that is, emotional-cognitive schemas of an isolable culture in the head) but increasingly inflected by inter-national relations, that is, by internalized external powers, or, as Taussig (1993) has shown for Latin American-US relations, the mimetic identification with external, colonizing powers. Both external borders and internal lines function as filters to define and regulate what belongs inside

and outside the individual or group. Several disciplines have contributed greatly to understanding such filters: psychoanalysis for what is kept outside and allowed inside the mind, sociology for the filter between groups, international relations for the borders between states and nations. Anthropology traverses these specializations, attentive to the interrelations of intra- and inter-psychic, personal, group, and national borders.

External borders and internal lines often operate at cross-purposes. Let me offer several examples. Internal moral distinctions can enforce an external border (as in the use of anti-Muslim stereotypes by Greeks to enforce a physical border with Turkey), or create a radical extremity of something that was previously within the social body (as in the attempt to annihilate the Jews of Europe by placing them outside the social). Internal distinctions can stabilize tense relations between forms of difference (as in contemporary German-French differences, which are deployed as complementary and used to invert centuries of hostility), or destabilize those relations by preventing exchanges or delaying reciprocities (as with Cold War boundaries between Poles and Germans). A border in the mind may prevent some information from entering, thwarting the learning essential to change or survive, or, inversely, it may inadequately defend the self and let too much information in, overwhelming the emotional capacity to understand what is inside and outside in the first place.

The possible configurations of play and power between internal and external borders are infinite. Here, I want to focus on how (external) territorial borders physically quite distant from a center, from that which they are supposed to protect, become internal objects, mental representations to which one is attached. Through this attachment to the extremity, as Sahlins (1989) demonstrated in his classic study of French-Spanish border histories, and as Borneman (1991, 1992) did for the two Berlins during the Cold War, personal or group conflicts that are external to and outside oneself, that occur at some distant physical border, can become perceived as internal.

Therefore, having a border far removed from one's own center is no guarantee of peace and stability at home, as skirmishes at the border often have lasting effects on the center. This was the case for the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, which as centers often fought proxy wars in geographically distant zones. The Berlin Wall and the borders between East and West Germany and East and West Europe performed these symbolic functions for the two centers. With the collapse of these Cold War boundaries within Europe, which of course never completely disappear as structuring devices, the borders within Europe no longer function to structure the borders of the US and Russia. World ideologies and world political-territorial-economic blocs have become unmoored.

Since 1990, Europe, instead of being the border zone for the border regimes of others, has now moved its own borders elsewhere, in fact outside instead of inside of Europe, and they revolve primarily around the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, its ocean on the west and sea on the south. To the west is the United States and the negotiation of relations with the American version of turbo-capitalism and political missionary work (Borneman 2003); to the south is the Middle East and the borders regulating the movement of people entering Europe, especially the Arabs in former colonies from Morocco to Syria; to the east, most significant are relations

with Israel, whose demarcations around the West Bank and Gaza – to contain the Palestinians – and borders with Lebanon and Egypt, structure Europe's relations to its ghosts.

Europe is also involved through its relations with the US and the Middle East in the impossible attempt to construct borders around Afghanistan (impossible without curtailing European consumption of Afghan opium), and the even more tragic attempt to refigure Iraq (only increasing its internal schisms and integrating it more tightly with Iran). The border, or the new wall, between the United States and Mexico performs a similar function for the US, of creating the idea of an outside at a considerable distance from the center, while at the same time remaining permeable for the export of America's violent weapons to Mexico and the intermittent import of Mexico's needed illegal laborers and its narcotics to the US. All of these borders borrow from and exchange with each other tactics, technologies, and rationales.

Let me return, briefly, to this issue of borders with the past, and the meaning of the borders of Israel for non-Israelis. People generally attach much affect to the Israeli border regime, irrespective of where they come from. For Europeans and Americans, the borders of Israel are unusually charged with what Douglas called internal lines, and they mean much more than their strategic location alone would seem to warrant, as they are quite distant territorially from these two centers. They mean so much in part because of the integral role Europe played in both creating the need for a Jewish homeland outside Europe and then creating it in Palestine (Morris 2001).

The Israeli border regime is a very complex system that tightly regulates immigration of Jews from the entire world, and itinerant laborers, nearly all of whom come from underdeveloped countries, half illegal, and emigration primarily to Europe and the US, along with internal controls, including apartheid-like roads, illegal settlements, displaced person camps, the prison of Gaza, and vibrant and marginal cities (cf. Weizman 2007; Segal et al. 2003). The regime is surrounded by Arabs, with whom it also regulates relations, or the intended nonrelations more characteristic of the current state of affairs. The emotions these various borders, walls, and flows evoke cannot be easily cognized or rationalized. American scholars, along with journalists and others who write about Israel, have contributed greatly to keeping the emotional pitch high and the actual conversations muted, inserting themselves as oversized, finger-waving superegos in discussions Europeans have with themselves about their past and present relations with Israel. Germans, especially, given their singular role in the European Holocaust, are subject to collective discipline about the frames in which they can legitimately speak and think about Israel.

There is much evidence of success in influencing the "internal lines" of Germans, and it includes German wariness and fear in approaching Israel critically, at least in public. Evidence of internalization if not masochism is that the very first thing many Germans do when they arrive in Israel is to visit Yad Vashem, whose official task is "to perpetuate the legacy of the Holocaust to future generations." Certainly these visits should be seen first and foremost as an act of repentance, but however much the affect attached to responsibility for the Holocaust may represent historical justice generally, a reckoning with truth and history, it is sadistic to insist that the Germans have inherited a direct, unending generational transmission of responsibility for historical crimes, especially when this responsibility does not also acknowledge the

contemporary reality of Palestinians within the narrative of Jewish victimization and emancipation.

Individual Germans or Americans or Israelis often sincerely believe they have a responsibility to the memory of the Holocaust. However, to the degree that Holocaust memory is not translated into heightened sensitivity and understanding about human suffering and its causes both generally and in other contexts and places, it leads merely to *Betroffenheit*, a repetitive sentiment that easily becomes self-pity. Such sentiment has the effect of monopolizing *Entrüstung* (indignation) for one community alone. In sum, the German relation to the contemporary Israeli state and society is usually directly inferred from the historical relations of Germans to Jews, a relationship overdetermined by ghosts from the past that are internal to the creation of external boundaries. Academics, by focusing almost exclusively on the issue of Germans and Jewish historical relations, play no small part in producing the affect that comes out of this proposition, which, in turn, obscures the fact that European borders are in fact being constructed in the Middle East.

### CIRCULATING VIOLENCE

Borders are about security, and external borders are especially about security from violence, the building of barriers, material and immaterial, to arrest the flow of threats. Violence circulates, and security measures follow the circulation of violence as it is displaced. The route between various border regimes is circuitous, and often carries us to unexpected mental and physical places, such as, for example, German affect regarding Jews and, by extension, the relation between the Israeli border regime and new European borders. We can follow one such circuit of displacement by beginning outside of Europe, with the French term *Levant*, a term with a long history and many references. Geographically it refers to the meeting point of western Asia, the eastern Mediterranean, and northern Africa, and during the period of the Crusades became synonymous with the Holy Land. Today it refers to the particular ecosystem that includes the states of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian territory. Each territorial-political unit has a particular border regime, and they are all related to Europe, today mediated centrally through Israel. European troops, including German, are stationed along the Israeli-Lebanese border, which is where I encountered them, guarding the Lebanese coast, not from Israelis, of course, toward whom they are not to point guns, but to hinder the movement of Arabs and Muslims generally.

On Israeli maps the Palestinian territory, to the south of Lebanon, is usually lightly demarcated, and appears to have an independent integrity which in reality it does not. Maps from 1946 to the present show the remarkable transformation of Palestinian villages and cities into Israeli territory, and the reduction of land called Palestinian into small, discontinuous parcels.<sup>1</sup> The "West Bank barrier," mentioned earlier, whose construction began in 2003, walls in the largest single parcel of Palestinian territory near the center of Israel, with Israeli settlements inside this parcel. And then there is Gaza, which can only be described as a very large prison, that borders Egypt to the south.

Being very familiar with the Berlin Wall, and its rationalizations and criticisms, I see both the Israeli wall and the new, only partially constructed, American fence which has been built to regulate the flow with Mexico, as anachronistic. By comparison, the no-longer-existing Berlin Wall appears visually innocent, even playful, certainly less deadly. I would like to begin, then, with the security of Israel question, and trace the circulation of violence from one of its most recent eruptions, in the Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006, which resulted in the stationing of European troops on the south Lebanese border with Israel.<sup>2</sup>

Claiming to be responding to a raid on July 12 by Hezbollah forces into Israel in which they abducted two Israeli soldiers and killed three others, and to a failed rescue mission in which five more soldiers were killed, Israel launched massive airstrikes and artillery fire on Lebanese civilian infrastructure, an air and naval blockade, and a ground invasion of southern Lebanon. The war lasted for 34 days, from July 12 to August 14, in the summer of 2006, and pitted Hezbollah (Party of God) paramilitary forces against the state of Israel. During the fighting, 159 Israelis were killed, most of whom were soldiers but including 41 civilians hit by some 4,000 Katyusha rockets and mortars indiscriminately lobbed by Hezbollah forces from Lebanon into northern Israel; another 997 were injured (75 "seriously" and 115 "moderately"), and approximately 300,000 Israeli civilians were temporarily displaced.

On the other side, 1,191 Lebanese were killed, nearly all civilians, with an estimated third of the fatalities being children under 12, the overall number including 43 Lebanese soldiers and police, 74 Hezbollah and 17 Amal combatants; some 4,490 Lebanese were wounded, and approximately 900,000 were displaced. Israeli attacks obliterated a few villages and sections of Beirut and Tyre, set some forests in the north afire, caused an estimated \$280 million in agricultural damage, and in targeting power stations and oil refineries unleashed an oil slick in the eastern Mediterranean whose cost in environmental damage is estimated at \$64 million. There was also the July 25 airstrike on a United Nations peacekeeping post in Khiyam, leaving four UNIFIL observers dead.

Perhaps the most controversial of these attacks was the artillery units' use of white phosphorous shells (which cause painful and often lethal burns), and the dropping by the air force, indiscriminately in civilian areas, of at least 1,800 cluster bombs containing 1.2 million cluster bomblets around the south of Lebanon. Now, to consider this war as a series of justified security measures (with regrettable collateral damage) to put an end to violence, as did Israel and the supportive American George W. Bush administration in its public statements, as well as some European governments and many scholars, is one way to look at the conflict. Another is to see this Israeli-Hezbollah War as circulating violence, more specifically a series of reciprocal, though disproportionate war crimes that countries like Israel and nonstate militias like Hezbollah inside Lebanon can engage in with legal impunity.

In early December 2006, at a large conference on legal anthropology at Yale University, I gave a talk on this war and the implications for international law of the lack of prosecution for war crimes. Eleven months later one participant described to me her perception of the audience reaction as "icy silence." The discussant and two quite renowned feminist lawyers on my panel were obviously outraged, if not embarrassed, and overtly avoided engagement with me. Shortly after, I visited Bint Jbail,

a formerly beautiful, relatively prosperous, predominantly Sunni village in southern Lebanon, where I took photos of war damage. I have since published this material in a Canadian journal of international law (Borneman 2007).

Lebanon is a porous, weak state but with strong sectarian identifications. Syria has the same sectarian divisions but a large Sunni majority (85 percent), and, by contrast with Lebanon, is an authoritarian police state, much like the former East Germany. Where these two secular states, Lebanon and Syria, unite, if at all – despite the difficult relations between the two, including suspected Syrian assassinations of independent figures in Lebanon – is around a pan-Arabism based on an identification both with the victims in Bint Jbail and also with Palestinian suffering under Israeli occupation. In both countries the Palestinian issue is a daily item in print and on television. There are televisions on street corners in Aleppo, where I spent a year in 2004–2005, that play the entire day to passersby live pictures of Israeli violence against Palestinians and American violence against Iraqis, just pictures with no commentary. Only to the Israeli state, however, are individuals in Jbail identifying with Hezbollah the same as individuals in Gaza identifying with Hamas, which in turn brings about a counter-transferral identification that unites Arabs against Jews. Among themselves, as Arabs, the internal lines are as great as the external boundaries.

And here is where the circuit of violence moves from the space of the Levant backward in time to Europe. In the whole world, only in the Levant does European neocolonialism continue: settler movements, victor's justice, action with impunity from legal prosecution. From North Africa to the Arab Gulf States, this history of European colonial occupation is still very much alive as memory. Castles from the Crusades can still be found in Syria. Above all, though, this memory is alive territorially only in Palestine and Iraq. The Palestinian resistance draws its moral legitimacy from the same source Jewish Zionists drew from: European emancipation and state-building movements, along with former independence struggles from Europe. Before 2002, Hezbollah resistance to Israeli occupation of south Lebanon also drew from this same source.<sup>3</sup> It is through this lens of present occupations that most Arabs see the West, giving motivation to the more radical forms of resistance to it.

Although continuous with the resistance to colonial domination, this pan-Arabism is not necessarily anti-European or anti-American – too many Arabs live in Detroit, Paris, and London. After the Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon in 2002, I met an amazing number of people from Detroit in the small, Hezbollah-friendly southern towns of Nabatiyah and Naqurah. But Europe and the United States are the guarantors of Israeli neocolonialism, and through this connection the violence in the Levant circles back in time and forward in space to Europe, where the new border regime intends to keep out precisely these people and this violence.

### **CORPORATE LIMITED LIABILITY IN THE NEW EUROPEAN BORDER REGIME**

Among the mechanisms of internal policing of this new European border regime, perhaps the most underestimated has been the expansion of the notion of the limited

liability corporation. Here I shall restrict myself to the legal form common in Germany and Central Europe, the GmbH: Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung. In my experience of Europe over the last 40 years, I have hardly noticed this mechanism, despite radical material and ideological changes. If there has been an effect to the expansion of corporations, then, it has been insidious, unannounced by a movement or spokespersons, working with and through the present political form, which itself has changed little. The postsocialist transformation of authoritarian, planned economy into more democratic market-oriented states has not produced any novelties in the understanding of the political, or the organization and practices of the state. The one exception would be the Balkans, where the very mutability of the form of state and people makes it the exception or limit case within Europe to European order.

In short, despite the end of Cold War division, which entailed the unification of Germany, the strengthening and expansion of the EU into the East, and the indeterminacy of the Balkans, the territorial map of European states has changed little. What has changed are the demographics of the people: there are more elderly and more immigrants. Turks and North Africans and people from the Levant, along with select other groups, began arriving as temporary laborers in groups in the 1970s. Many have stayed, and they have dramatically changed the public face of most European countries. In some countries, foreign-born citizens number more than one-fourth. Along with this demographic change, which has meant more movement between European and non-European states, the European Union took over some of the powers of national governments – for example, in currency control, legislation, and science policies. Both changes signify new regimes of sovereignty at borders: new instances controlling the movement of objects and people through space. Territorial sovereignty and peoplehood were the two principles founding the modern, post-Westphalian European order, subsequently exported to the entire world. They are now severely challenged as modes of regulating internal and external borders, specifically the circulation of violence that operates through manipulation of border regimes.

Here is where the notion of the company with limited liability becomes significant as a mode of traversing people and space, of organizing relations between states as well as the relations of states to citizens and noncitizens, and as a mechanism for policing capital. One convincing explanation of why socialist Eastern Europe could not compete with capitalist Western Europe economically is the lack of transnational corporations in the East that could move freely between states and destroy the older national or even prenational structures of socioeconomic and political organization. After the opening of the Wall, I witnessed how these corporations, under the guise of “privatization” driven by the Treuhandanstalt, moved en masse into East Germany and took advantage of the new property regime to assume control over the essential sectors of food distribution, housing maintenance/renovation, manufacturing, and industrial production.

The notion of “limited liability” for corporations is much older, of course, and has different histories in English common law and the continental European civil law traditions, and then again there are differences in the German-dominated Central European civil law and the French-influenced sphere to the west. Regardless of the origin and sphere in which the concept has developed, it has been essential to

creating the wealth that we associate with the European economy since the late nineteenth century, including the wealth that made possible the modern social-welfare state. In Germany, the laws regulating this form were adopted in 1892, and it has since become the most common corporate form there, if not in Europe as a whole. Its function was to raise large amounts of capital by selling shares to investors, who became partners in the corporation but were not personally liable for the company's debts.

Today, however, the limited liability company, as concept and institution, appears to be in direct conflict with and undermining the social-welfare state. While the extension of individual notions of personhood to corporations has been most advanced in the United States, in Europe, too, a parallel extension of the concept of limited liability to corporations has increasingly been used to evade communal or national responsibilities that in the past were assumed to follow from ownership of property. Such a concept normalizes hedonistic conceptions of social relations over any notion of shared sacrifice in the many spheres of life outside a narrowly conceived "economy," and facilitates the transformation of the individual from producer to consumer.<sup>4</sup> These transformations have been so naturalized, in practice and theory, that only ethnographic comparison of "the West" with other world culture-regions, such as New Guinea or Central Africa, might alert us to question how consumerist ideology and the model of the limited liability corporation organize relations between persons and things.<sup>5</sup>

It is important to ask how corporations with limited liability are refiguring territoriality within Europe – concepts of relations of people to each other, to land and property, and to the state itself. Such corporate refiguring is going on beneath the radar, so to speak, of most academic projects. For example, three of the most expansive and scholarly recent books about modern European history that engage extensively with economic processes – Charles Maier's *Dissolution* (1997), Niall Ferguson's *The Cash Nexus* (2001), and Tony Judt's *Postwar* (2005) – contain no entry for corporations in their lengthy indexes.

Ethnographically, it is impossible to miss this economic tsunami, for people everywhere in Europe are reacting to and commenting on its effects without being able to identify the causes. "Euro-pessimism" is one word used to gloss the reaction. Another, in German, is *meckern* – constant complaining. While some analysts might want to claim Europeans have always stressed the negative, or Germans have always found fault when possible, this current complaint is, I think, a reaction to a quite specific historical situation.

People are grumbling because life is becoming part of a neo-authoritarian laboratory, and because the EU is increasingly reduced to facilitating the creation of Europe as a free trade zone especially friendly to limited liability legal entities and to the "consumer." Current European capitalism no longer needs producers or democracy or, at the civil level, reciprocity, forms of politeness, or hospitality. The administrative integration of Europe proceeds like a juggernaut along market lines – with uniformization in production, pricing, policing, pensions, as well as in consuming, though, as always, class differentiated in experience. Before 9/11 and the legislation of new surveillance regimes, some scholars cast the new security arrangements as progressive. In the hopeful words of Mary Kaldor, the "extension of the rule of law and civil

society across borders [is] . . . a continuous process of enlargement" (2000: 58). This extension and enlargement has been perversely in sync with the shift to neo-authoritarianism. The project is a hierarchical, centralizing one, but also a "rationalization" in the name of "evergrowing interconnectedness," with little acknowledgment of the ideals of European identification with human rights, multiculturalism, and tolerance and diversity, all of which Kaldor lists (2000: 60). Among European peoples, there is little popular understanding or agreement about the motivations or visions of the future other than orientation to a general consumer capitalism and security from an outside – Muslims, Arabs, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the American way – that is already internal to Europe.

From today's perspective, the 1990s were in fact a heyday and perhaps the endpoint for European political integration, which resulted in 2004 in the enlargement of the EU from 15 to 25 states, and the addition of 72 million individual East-Central European members. At the time, this incorporation into the EU was represented as a model of harmony between nation-states working for the common good, with a single foreign minister to represent all member countries to the exterior. Simultaneously, however, many of the social benefits achieved since World War II were rolled back, and forms of local welfare and sociality destabilized. To be sure, the effects of these policies were uneven, and I know of no large-scale study of the distribution of effects. But a visit to any of the small towns of East Germany, which have been renovated with heavy subsidies from West Germany, reveals a very sad landscape of social disintegration, resulting largely from the youth and brain drain to the West: ghost towns, empty apartments and houses with newly repaired sidewalks and a few lovingly renovated facades; and high unemployment and low productivity of those who do work, despite the widespread use of government-subsidized worker training programs (*Arbeitsbeschaffungsmaßnahmen*). Many of the corporations that moved in for quick profits and cheaper, skilled labor after 1990 subsequently left for greener fields. Yet, those people left behind, primarily the very young, very old, and the unskilled, have also become part of the enlarged EU, integrated into its political structure and market, with political representation, stable pensions, consumption of exchangeable goods priced in precious euros, and security from a threatening outside.

Worries about the dismantling of the welfare society, visible everywhere, are often displaced into longstanding concerns about the loss of national sovereignty, specifically with regard to immigration and the free movement of labor promoted by the Brussels-based bureaucracy of the EU. Along with the transfer of factories to new member states, and competition for corporations and their investment capital from countries with lower tax regimes, immigrants from the East have indeed, as widely feared, flooded into Western Europe, though not equally to every country. This population movement has reinforced the ideology of limited or even no liability at the individual level. To be sure, this new labor force kept wages down, making consumer goods cheaper than they would otherwise have been, but also it has squeezed the lower middle classes who, with less income relative to more expensive goods, can no longer afford the same level of services. The cheap labor in the West has also initially contributed greatly to general economic growth and productivity, much as cheap labor of *Vertriebene* (refugees from the eastern territories) did following World War II.



This movement of Europeans within Europe (omitting here the large movement of non-Europeans) has had not only negative but also serendipitous effects. A Greek friend of mine who lives in Berlin explained to me that, as younger Greeks no longer want to work on farms, a large number of Poles have taken the farms over, especially on the islands. As they brought needed skills and did not come in search of welfare, these Poles were welcomed and integrated into local life, much as many Albanians have been welcomed in the cities. It helps that the migrants learn the language and respect local customs. This story is not generalizable to wider European processes of integration, however. Africans and Arabs have an entirely different set of collective experiences, and perhaps this first group of first-generation postsocialist Poles are particularly industrious among East European immigrants, and this first generation of Albanian immigrants unusually assimilable.

What can be concluded, nonetheless, is that the immigrant “flood” from the East was the result of matching the needs of Western European countries for immigrants to fill shortages in skilled and unskilled labor and to support pension benefits for an ageing population unable to contribute to these benefits themselves. With the economic crisis in 2008, many of the educated, skilled, industrious laborers from the East lost their employment, and are now returning to their former socialist states, hoping that the faster growing economies there can reabsorb them. By contrast, there are the migrants from North Africa and Turkey, mostly Muslim and Arab, ranging from doctors to unskilled construction workers, who are perceived to threaten internal cohesion, or whatever is left of that expectation, within most of Europe. The entrance of Turkey into the EU is particularly controversial, and not only in France, which has the continent’s largest Muslim population, but also in Germany, where recent studies suggest a generational divide among Turkish residents about the terms and merits of cultural integration.

EU governments, never adept at managing immigration, have been unable to agree on a common European policy (Peebles 1997; Dell’Olio 2005). Instead, each member state has enacted its own immigration curbs, giving the appearance of an uncoordinated Fortress Europe, and a protectionist sentiment further reinforced by the rejection of the proposed treaty establishing a constitution for Europe in French and Dutch referendums in 2004, effectively ending the ratification process (for an early analysis of the fortress concept, cf. Stolcke 1995). Past history suggests immigration slows if integration is successful, but that is unlikely to be predictive of the present. Even if integration is by some metric successful, there appears to be an enduring structural difference between the economies of Europe and those of the global south (with the exception of some with oil wealth), which will continue to generate a push factor in migration.

The project of Europe, then, has devolved into an authoritarian or administrative capitalism, in part driven by the linked ideological concepts of “limited liability” and “consumerism.” This project has many paradoxes, including that the greatest opposition to immigration and EU expansion comes from the countries that profit most from its expansion and from European subsidies – Britain and France, for example. Ultimately, these well-fed countries stay on board precisely because the EU has become what Sloterdijk (2005) calls “a brainless system of transnational bank transfers to spoiled countries where national culture still dominates [and the] domain of

freedom [is] being eroded bit by bit.” In sum, this new border regime, notwithstanding its multiple intents, contradictions, cracks, and serendipitous effects, tends both, on the one hand, to reorient the symbolic order within Europe, redefining the relation of people to each other and to the state to accommodate the notion of limited liability, and, on the other, to produce a new notion of security that protects the politico-economic powers benefiting most from extensions of the concept of corporate personhood and conflation of the citizen with the consumer.

## SECURITY

Finally, I want to return to the question of external security and the circulation of violence, and to what I have written elsewhere as neo-authoritarian responses to the twin threats of America and Islam (Borneman 2003, 2011). These threats are not to territorial but to identificatory, ideological borders, to the security of a life course (what anthropologists in the past often called a “way of life”). In 2003, I argued that in the emerging post-Cold War form of triangulation structuring identifications in and between the US and Europe, both physical and spectral elements of the Middle East had replaced communism as the mediating Third. This new topos “Middle East,” I wrote, was “now actively internal to both European and US development, to their self-definitions and visions of the future” (Borneman 2003: 487). While I still agree with this statement, the conclusion I drew – that “Europe’s advanced secularization of Christianity allows for a more consistent and more thinkable model of Jewish and Muslim integration” – was way too optimistic. Instead, it appears to me now that the current European position to perceived externalities is an inward-turned passive-aggressiveness: some development aid and contribution to peacekeeping forces outside Europe, but, above all, no relations with others that might deflate the illusion of a life course that unfolds in a consumer paradise.

Europeans did in fact engage in some hand-wringing during the Israeli attack on Lebanon in 2006 described above. But ultimately they were unwilling to sacrifice anything that might shake their subservient relation to US militarism in the Middle East, or to take the initiative to redraw the international order they have exported – modeled on independent, sovereign, homogeneous nation-states – or to challenge Israeli neocolonial policies with actual consequences, despite the fact that the belligerents in this conflict are already internal to Europe, bringing the violence there within the European polity.

In order to save European liberalism from several kinds of tempting neo-authoritarian turns (e.g., state, party, sentiment, media dictatorial), Sloterdijk (2005) argues that there must be a new alliance between democracy and asceticism, “a voluntary acceptance of competitive disadvantages.”<sup>6</sup> But there is little evidence that European consumers are willing to yield some of their prosperity, not as the benefits of their welfare societies are being rolled back, at least not on any mass-movement scale.

This takes me to a final issue, of what exactly this new border regime is keeping out and allowing in. European political borders were originally and principally conceived as a way to divide up the earth, to organize colonial adventures among

European countries, and to export Europe's political model. As scholars such as Anderson (1983), Balibar (2004), and Zolberg (1983) have long argued, this entailed exporting everywhere a notion of a people that itself created violent internal tensions, persecutions, and mass migrations. While Europeans have subjectively interiorized this idea of the border, resulting in a prosperous and relatively peaceful order among themselves, other parts of the world, including parts of Europe such as the Balkans, have not.<sup>7</sup> This idea of the border, however inadequate to account for the current state of affairs, or as orientation for the future, nonetheless has its uses, and that is, to underwrite a repressive mechanism that keeps certain realities – such as relations of circulating violence with the Balkans, Afghanistan, or Palestine, or relations evading collective responsibility resulting from the dominance of the consumer and limited liability corporations – at a distance.

## NOTES

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- 1 Ostensibly to protect Israeli citizens from Palestinian attacks, the state has constructed a labyrinthine system of roads, especially around settlements in the West Bank, with differential access. The Israeli High Court of Justice initially approved such constructions on Palestinian land with the argument that they would enable Palestinian movement. David Kretzmar, an emeritus professor of international law at Hebrew University of Jerusalem, recently accused Israel's High Court of Justice of "judicial hypocrisy" in its approval of one such road, Route 443. Initially rationalized as for the "local population," i.e., Palestinian use, it is now restricted to Israeli citizens alone. The court subsequently ruled this reversal of intent acceptable, for reasons of military security, and proposed as solution the construction of separate roads (a system of apartheid), i.e., a second one for Palestinians. See Kretzmar 2008. Recent studies by Israelis themselves have revealed that the settlements were always intended as permanent ways to shrink Palestinian and expand Jewish presence and control of land, in which all parts of Israeli society were involved (see Gorenberg 2007; Zertal and Eldar 2007).
- 2 The following facts are based on these reports: UN Human Rights Council 2006; UN News Centre 2006; Amnesty International 2006a, 2006b; *Daily Star* 2006; Erlich 2006.
- 3 The fact that these independence struggles have not been able to reproduce Europe's liberal democracies outside of Europe is another point, which deserves attention I cannot give here. One line of inquiry would be to explain how the rage against oppression of Palestinians is a displacement of one's own ineffectuality in establishing democratic sovereignty in one's own country. Of course, the culpability for this ineffectuality, especially the inability to depose the autocratic regimes throughout the Middle East, has much to do with the essential support – politically and in terms of payments for oil – provided by Western governments.
- 4 Corporate limited liability builds on and is a further development of the ideology of individualism, taking the corporate entity to be of a higher order, supplanting the individual and often the nation in law as a superior transnational legal unit. Louis Dumont was the first anthropologist to explicate what he called "the individualist revolution . . . a displace-

ment of the main value stress from society as a whole (holism) to the human individual taken as embodiment of humanity at large (individualism)" (1970: 32–33). Dumont posits this revolution as necessary in order to create the nation form, as "at once a collection of individuals and a collective individual."

- 5 Seen from this historical context, what does European integration, unification, whatever we want to call it, mean for the expansion of democracy? There are two common framings of the citizenship issue, one that argues the linking of citizenship to nationality makes it difficult to create any pan-European sense of citizenship, which might be possible if citizenship were tied instead to residence. Hence, despite the integration of new European states into the old EU – European enlargement – there has been no integrative mechanisms at the supranational level, as each individual is ultimately still dependent on his or her individual member state. That is, citizenship – rights and identity – is still inferred from nationality and neither dependent on any particular experience as a citizen, nor "experienced in the context of the EU" (Dell'Olio 2005: 10). The second framing has to do with the conflict between inclusion and security needs. The widespread expectation of Europeanization by those outside Europe (including the former communist bloc members recently integrated) is frustrated both by a perception of all immigrants as non-European, regardless of what they do, and by perceived security needs that tend to reinforce the exclusion of all strangers. In short, the inclusion argument gets constantly trumped by the exclusionary needs of security (cf. DeBardeleben 2005). These framings are on the surface correct, but they take for granted the notions of "corporate personhood" and "consumerism," which structure both the "integrative mechanisms" and "expectations of Europeanization".
- 6 Sloterdijk (2005) writes that the postliberal turn in the world generally is taking many authoritarian forms, including "China's 'party dictatorial' mode, the Soviet Union's 'state dictatorial' mode, the USA's 'sentiment dictatorial' mode and finally the 'media dictatorial' mode of Berlusconi's Italy."
- 7 Since the break-up of Yugoslavia, European reaction to the refiguring of the Balkans generally, as well as the ongoing indeterminacy of Kosovo, suggests an impasse in European integration of "the West," in particular in determining what is inside and outside of Europe. The Balkans was considered an "out of area" (as the political scientists call it) region that nonetheless required European intervention to prevent crimes against humanity (which had already taken place), all with American help and/or leadership. The use of European means (e.g., military by using the NATO alliance, political by insisting on state form with relations to the EU) to do anything other than freeze the conflict calls into question these means not only as a universal form but also as an index of Europe itself.

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