Border Topologies: The Time-Spaces of Labour Migrant Regulation

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Labour migrants seeking work and employment increasingly find themselves having to negotiate an ambiguous migrant status that leaves them neither fully included, nor fully excluded, from a political community. Of late, there has been a recognition that such ambiguity arises as much from temporal as spatial border management practices. Rather than consider time and temporality as integral to the distorted spatiality of contemporary political borders, however, the tendency has been to treat the former as a supplement to the latter. In this paper, we set out to show how time and space work through one another to place migrant workers partly on the 'inside', partly on the 'outside', by selectively combining their pre-and post-entry experiences. In order to make sense of this series of temporal and spatial entanglements, we advance a particular topological reading that aims to show how complex migrant positions are produced and maintained by bringing the times before and after the border into play as part of what enables governments to include and exclude labour migrants in a more differentiated manner. Such regulated time-spaces, of which we outline two, indefinite exclusion and suspended inclusion, in our view, offer a more accurate account of the ways in which migrant workers are simultaneously included and excluded.

Keywords: topology; time-spaces; regulation; differential inclusion; labour migration; indefinite exclusion; suspended inclusion

Introduction

In recent years, border studies has undergone something of spatial renaissance. Political geographers and others with an interest in the regulation of cross-border movement and access to rights have mapped out the spatial reconfiguration of contemporary political borders, including the blurring of inclusion and exclusion and internal and external spaces that come with increasingly spatially ambiguous border management practices (Allen, 2016; Bialasiewicz, 2012; Bigo, 2000, 2001; Coleman 2007, 2012, Mountz 2011; Popescu, 2012). It is increasingly recognized, however, that this ambiguity is not wholly spatial in the making.

Time and temporality have also been deployed by states as tools in the regulation of movement and access to rights. Particular attention has been given to the role of detention and confinement as a way of calibrating the speed of migration, as opposed to blocking it

entirely (e.g. Andrijasevic, 2010; Papadopoulos, Stephenson and Tsianos, 2008). Mezzadra and Neilson (2013) thoughtfully extend this debate to include labour migration. Their account of the ambiguous lives of labour migrants post-entry draws on differential inclusion, a concept they adopt from feminist and antiracist thought as well as migration studies. On this view, labour migrants may be physically present on the 'inside', yet find themselves 'outside' the protection of employment law or denied access to housing and other welfare benefits. Differential inclusion, they remind us, however, is not only a spatial arrangement. Temporal technologies also have a bearing on the creation of complex migrant positions.

While an important reminder, in this paper, we argue that in order to move the debate about contemporary political borders forward it is not enough to simply add a temporal dimension to an already existing spatial analysis or, as others have favoured, to foreground the temporal over the spatial (e.g. Mavroudi, Page and Christou, 2017). Rather, taking the temporal seriously in an analysis of the changing shape of contemporary borders is to look at how time and space work through one another to change what it means to be inside and outside, before and after, the border as part of the production of increasingly ambiguous outcomes. Temporality, in our view, shapes and distorts the spatiality of the border in quite specific ways. If much previous research often ends with a broad statement of the ambiguous status of migrants, mapping out the regulated time-spaces through which governments attempt to manage their borders offers a more precise account of the ways in which migrants are simultaneously included and excluded.

As we see it, thinking about political borders as regulated time-spaces that exclude and include through more differentiated means lends itself to particular type of topological interpretation. Topology, at its most basic, offers a way of thinking about borders as more than a simple blurring of the internal and external space of a political community, and suggests how a particular configuration of an 'outside' may shape the lives of those within and how an 'inside' may influence the lives of others isolated and confined beyond. Without a grasp of how the times before and after the border, their rhythm and tempo, are equally entangled, however, a basic spatial topology is likely to miss the ways in which the pre-and post-entry lives of migrants shape what it means to be 'inside' and 'outside' a political community at one and the same time, neither fully included or excluded in terms of legal rights and protections. Contemporary political borders, as such, we believe are best thought about as topological time-spaces through which governments intentionally or sometimes

inadvertently produce and maintain ambiguous migrant statuses.

The paper draws on documentary analysis conducted in 2017 and approximately 85 semistructured interviews in Sweden and the UK. The documentary analysis included white papers, government bills and government reports in both countries. In Sweden, ministry directives for the years 2008-2017, the Migration Agency's handbook – a 1,300 pages guidance for staff deciding application – and a number of administrative directives were also analysed and, in the UK, the immigration rules and Home Office guidance for staff were also included in the sample. Three sets of interviews were conducted. In Sweden, interviews were conducted between 2014 and 2017 with actors in the information technology industry and in the restaurant industry. In the UK, interviews were conducted with representatives for the information technology industry in 2015 and 2017. Examples of actors that were included in the sample were: employer representatives, IT professionals and restaurant workers, immigration service providers and trade union representatives. In Sweden, eight interviews were also conducted with staff of the government body responsible for deciding work permit applications: the Migration Agency. In the empirical section of the paper we also draw on the work of others where appropriate in order to show that the forms of inclusion and exclusion that we set out in this paper apply to a broader spectrum of migrant workers than those covered by this fieldwork.

In the first part of the paper, we set out what engagement to date there has been with topology as a way of grasping why processes of inclusion and exclusion no longer neatly map onto separated spaces either side of a sovereign political border. In particular, we focus upon how temporality has largely been seen as a supplement to spatial borders, a dimension to be added into accounts of how the international movement of migrants and their access to rights are regulated. Following that, we attempt to show how, rather than a supplement, the temporal distortion of borders is an integral part of the production of an ambiguous status that migrants on the 'inside' experience, one that masks a continuous topological exchange between inside and outside, before and after, the border. Drawing on examples from Canada, Sweden and the UK, from our own work and that of others, we set out two instances of regulated time-spaces, indefinite exclusion and suspended inclusion, that advance an understanding of border topologies that goes beyond simply adding in time to an existing spatial mix. In the final part, we try to bring out what this particular reading of topology has to contribute towards understanding contemporary political borders.

Bordering on topology

It is perhaps no surprise that topology has become of recent interest to those trying to understand the distorted shape of many of today's political borders. Topology, a branch of mathematics, after all, is concerned with relationships that survive the process of distortion, relationships that stay the same in spite of being stretched or folded in whatever way. Crucially, those relationships are unaffected by changes in size, shape or distance, which in the case of political borders has an obvious attraction in so far as states increasingly appear able to distort their borders in ways that reproduce their powers of exclusion and inclusion in new settings and in new ways. The growing sense in which borders are no longer at the edges of sovereign territory, that they have been pushed outwards and pulled inwards, has in that respect fuelled topological speculation (Coleman, 2012; Giaccaria and Minca, 2011; Mezzarda and Neilson, 2012; Mountz, 2011; Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2009; Popescu; 2012). Much of that speculation revolves around an awareness that processes of exclusion and inclusion no longer discreetly map onto the spatial separation between what is 'inside' and what is 'outside' state borders.

The spatial twists and turns which underpin this ever more complex account of what is 'internal' and what is 'external' to the political border, however, do not account for all the distortions in play. Temporal distortions to the management of the border, the noted use of time, whether through delay, disruption or constant upheaval (Gill, 2009; Griffiths, 2014; Martin, 2012; Mezzadra and Neilson, 2012) or by altering the speed of migratory movements (Papadopoulos et al, 2008), have revealed another dimension to the complexity of border relationships. If there are spaces in which rights are determined, there are also times when access to legal and social rights may be denied or periods, for instance, when labour migrants lack access to social rights and benefits or the right to change employer. On this view, the times of the border are as important as its spaces, and are part and parcel of the ways in which political borders have changed shape in recent times.

How the two dimensions, the temporal and the spatial, have been employed in border studies, however, has more often than not diverged, with the former acting as a supplement to space rather than part of an ongoing transformation of the 'inside/outside' logic to political borders.

The spatial reconfiguration of borders

Any reference to an 'inside/outside' logic to state borders invariably echoes the concerns of Rob Walker's (1993) classic text that questioned the regulative ideal of clear and distinct borders, with practice frequently diverging from such an ideal. A quarter of a century on, his writings on the rearticulation of political space still warn against framing issues such as exclusion and inclusion within a simple spatial dichotomy that identifies separate internal and external spheres of authority and control (Walker, 2006, 2010, 2016). In the context of contemporary practices of border management and security practices more broadly, Walker's work continues to influence debate (Vaughan-Williams, 2008, 2012), although it was Didier Bigo's (2000, 2001) earlier work on the blurred lines of internal and external state security which drew upon topology to make sense of such border distortions.

Bigo picked up on Walker's provocation over the difficulty of knowing where exactly the inside of sovereign political space ends and the outside begins. Writing at a time when it was apparent that those responsible for maintaining external security were looking inside borders in search of threats from outside and those policing the inside were looking beyond the border to counter risks within, the spatial ambiguity of border management practices was becoming increasingly evident. He likened the ambiguity to a 'process of externalization of the inside and internalization of the outside' (2001: 113), one akin to the topological figure of the Mobius strip where it is possible to envisage a continuous exchange between what happens internally and what takes place outside a sovereign territory. Continuous because, when stretched along its length, the apparently two-sided figure of the Mobius strip reveals itself to be one-sided, so that locations on opposite sides turn out to be part of a single continuous space. Points or sites on opposing sides of the strip, whilst different, are in fact related when the figure is seen as a whole.

The apparent blurred lines of security that a Mobius-style sovereignty reveals stands in contrast to the cylindrical model of sovereign territoriality. State sovereignty, on this idealised model, is defined by its outer edges, where there is a clear separation between an 'open' inside and a 'closed' outside. Once the inside and outside seemingly merge politically, and become harder to differentiate, the customary cylindrical model of sovereignty is said to break down and the functions of border security morph in response to the threats that arise from the growing movement of people across all manner of borders. Topologically, there is a sense in which a Mobius-style sovereignty resembles less a state exercising authority over its borders

'from above' and more one able to establish arm's-length reach into new spaces of enforcement, both externally to secure the internal realm and internally to physically deport those deemed a risk (see Coleman, 2007, 2012). Put another way, the ability of states to distort their borders, although in itself not something new, is seen to offer governments a more discriminatory means by which the cross-border movement of people and their access to rights may be regulated (Popescu, 2017).

Such a focus is in line with Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson's (2012) topologically inspired analysis of borders. Their focus is on differential inclusion, where borders work to select, filter and channel labour. As they see it, from a topological standpoint, the selective filtering of mobility produces different degrees of internality and externality. Differential inclusion, for them, works by substituting the binary between inclusion and exclusion with a continuous network of topological control, where labour migrants on the 'inside', having gained entry, find themselves included for the purpose of skilled or unskilled work, yet excluded from welfare and other social rights. Similarly, labour migrants on the 'outside', detained at or away from border may be subjected to processes of filtering that place them in a subordinate legal position, as well as finding their right of movement suspended.

What becomes increasingly apparent from their analysis, however, is that the boundary line evident in the two-sided figure of the Mobius strip is no longer readily distinguishable. Bigo (2001) reached a similar conclusion, noting that contemporary borders resembled more the topological figure of the Klein bottle where the 'inside' of a sovereign state has folded in on itself to merge, as it were, with an outside surface. The outsourcing of border controls, the offshoring of detention facilities, is a case in point, where the apparent folding out of borders works to place entry for some further out of reach, along with the rights lawfully theirs if able to gain entry (see Bialasiewicz, 2012, Vaughan-Williams, 2012). In a similar fashion, it could be argued that the folding in of borders draws migrants already working in a country within reach of authorities seeking to exploit the ambiguous nature of their legal status.

In the UK, for instance, following the Immigration Act 2016, when migrants seek hospital treatment, search for a job, enrol in higher education, get married, rent a room privately or open a bank account, they leave themselves vulnerable to detention and removal. Hospitals, job centres, universities, registrar offices, letting agencies and banks, in that regard, can be said to form part of Mezzadra and Neilson's continuous network of topological control, albeit

one more Kleinian in nature where there is no discernible inside or outside, only spaces through which rights are determined. A determination made all the more ambiguous, as they make clear, by the fact that labour migrants are often neither fully admitted in terms of rights and legal protections, nor fully proscribed from setting foot in a given territory.

As Mezzadra and Neilson (2013) point out, however, such ambiguity is not merely spatial in the making. Time and temporality are also tools that have been deployed to create complex migrant positions.

The times of the border

The control of time, the deployment of temporality as a tool, either to heighten the ambiguous legal status of migrants who have already gained entry or to block entry by displacing the border in time, has been the subject of recent attention, much of it around the use of detention and confinement as a means of temporal displacement (Andersson, 2014; Andrijasevic, 2010; Donnan et al, 2017; Jones and Johnson, 2017; Little, 2015; Martin, 2012; Mountz, 2011, 2017; Papadopoulos et al, 2008; Tazzioli, 2018). Ruben Andersson (2014) refers to the latter as the active 'usurpation of time', where state authorities appropriate migrant's time through delays, disruptions and deferrals, in temporary holding centres, waiting zones, or internment in a country of transit, as well as detainment in detention centres. Whether before or after the border, on remote island locations (Mountz, 2011) or in prison facilities close by (Martin, 2012), detainment serves to interrupt the rights of those claiming inclusion. Rather than a simple device to block migratory movements, on such accounts, the control of migrant time serves both to regulate the pace of migration and stall the claims-making process.

Nick Gill (2009), for instance, has documented how the management of time to delay or defer asylum applications by the constant transfer of asylum seekers between detention centres adds up to a form of temporal displacement. In such circumstances, engagement with the judicial decision-making process, or progress made in respect of appeals and release dates, can be hampered by the constant upheaval involved and the difficulty of tracing the whereabouts of detainees. Not being allowed to settle may appear a fairly timid means of interdiction, but its effect can be to place further out of reach any likely resolution of a detainee's 'right to stay' claim. The constant deferral of claims, the frustration of waiting and the exhaustion of upheaval, may all work to displace in time a detainee's right to claim inclusion (Martin,

2012).

Melanie Griffiths (2014), by contrast, has highlighted how deportations and removals also involve an accelerated sense of time. Decisions about deportation are often made quickly and are sometimes followed by frenzied attempts to appeal. The acceleration of time is consequently just as much a part of the regulation of migratory movements as its deceleration (see also Cwerner, 2004; Griffiths, 2017). Indeed, detainees often contend with moments of rush when a decision suddenly is made, alongside the waiting and idleness that are very much at the centre of everyday life in the asylum system. Detention can consequently be seen not only as something that slows down migration (e.g. Papadopoulos et al, 2008), but also as a period of extreme temporal ambiguity where periods of waiting and feeling stuck are cut through with moments of frenzy.

The displacement in time that detention represents, the interruption of a migrant's time both before and after the border, has led Mezzadra and Neilson (2013) to refer to such developments as, effectively, a series of 'temporal borders'. Temporal borders are said to rework the distinction between inclusion and exclusion, governing not only the time and speed by which migrants are able to move into labour markets, but also their ability to access rights and legal protections. As part of a network of controls, the technologies of temporal management are seen to act as a supplement to spatial regulation, stretching and manipulating time to control the movement and rights of migrant labour. Differential inclusion, in this context, accounts for the ambiguous status of labour migrants, not so much through spatial means as the times that regulate their working lives post-entry. This, for them, has less to do with the relative loss of time and more to do with a subordinate migrant status that shapes their partial incorporation on arrival and indeed for long after.

For Mezzadra and Neilson, that secondary ambiguous status represents a kind of 'internal border', one that permeates everyday life for migrants who are included through specific labour practices yet find their post-entry lives shaped by their passage of entry. On this view, the seemingly unified space of the nation state is stratified with internal borders that harbour a multiplicity of times that serve to limit incorporation in terms of access to rights and protections enjoyed by those of a more settled status. Migrants are presumed to live that national space more as a form of temporal thickness and diversity, rather than a spatial arrangement defined by an 'inside' and an 'outside'.

On the face of it, such a claim seems entirely reasonable, given the perceived limitations of regulating access to rights solely through spatial bordering mechanisms (Tazzioli, 2018). Yet for all Mezzadra and Neilson's deliberation about temporal processes reconfiguring national space, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that time and temporality are little more than an add on to a pre-existing spatial analysis of borders, a supplement, as they infer, to a routine emphasis on space and spatial mechanisms. As such, there seems no real attempt to explore whether the times before and after the border, their rhythm and tempo, may actually transform the inside/outside logic of borders to shape and distort them in specific ways. If indeed, the 'inside' and 'outside' of contemporary borders possess a temporal dimension, one where the internal and external spaces of a political community are as much to do with the times of pre- and post-entry, the challenge is surely to show how they work through one another to shape access to jobs, benefits and rights for different groups of labour migrants.

Moreover, such a challenge is also a concern for a Kleinian set of topological borders where, if the line between inside and outside is no longer discernible, to what extent has the erasure of the interval between the pre- and post- working lives of migrants also contributed towards a series of ambiguous migrant positions?

Regulated time-spaces of labour migration

As part of that challenge, we explore two instances where the pre- and post-entry lives of labour migrants appear bound up with one another in such a way that their ambiguous status on the 'inside' only appears explicable through their continuous links to an 'outside'. Put another way, certain categories of migrant workers find themselves partly on the 'inside' and partly on the 'outside' because of the ways in which the pace, tempo or duration of their pre- and post-entry lives selectively combine. In such instances, the temporal dimension to border management practices appears integral to the spatially distorted character of contemporary political borders, not a supplement of sorts. Rather than a concern with the times and spaces of border management, in our view a focus on the time-spaces of migrant regulation offers a more promising avenue of inquiry into the production and maintenance of complex migrant positions.

In what follows, we first consider the position of two groups of migrant labour – seasonal agricultural workers and intra-company transferees – whose repeated movement in and out

of state territories where they are only partially included for pre-defined, short periods of time has led to their indefinite exclusion from rights associated with settlement. After that, we shift the focus to a different time-space of labour migration, the suspended inclusion of migrant workers who are on the path to permanent status yet lack the right to remain.Where the former status is shaped by the induced rhythm of their movement and duration of their presence on the 'inside', the second is produced by the pace at which different categories of migrant worker are given access to rights, protections and benefits enjoyed by settled workers.

In both settings, a focus on the stretching and folding of border relationships through time opens up a different way of conceptualising the inside/outside logic of borders, one that to our mind also raise questions of what a topological reading of borders has to offer.

Indefinite exclusion

Political borders are increasingly designed to facilitate the temporary mobility of migrant labour. Over the past decade, there has been a rise in migration programmes that favour the circulation or return migration over permanent settlement (Castles, 2006; Khoo et al, 2007). Both lower-skilled workers and highly skilled professionals increasingly cross borders to provide just-in-time, easily replaceable labour that arrives when it is needed and is shipped back as soon as the job is completed (Jordan and Duvell, 2002; Tomic and Trumper, 2012). Because the right to remain and access to welfare and other social rights are commonly only granted after a certain length of time has been spent working on the 'inside' (Anderson, 2010), temporary migration programmes tend to produce labour that is indefinitely excluded from settlement. The first example of this highly mobile, migrant labour force considered is seasonal agricultural workers, whose transient presence on the 'inside' places them indefinitely on the 'outside'.

The agricultural sector increasingly depends upon cheap migrant labour and many governments stretch their authority through space and time by giving migrant workers access only to the agricultural sector, and only during specific times of the year. Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Worker Programme (SAWP), for example, which since 1966 has regulated access to Canada's agricultural industry, permits Caribbean and Mexican citizens to work in Canada for a maximum of eight months every year. Many of the participants in the

SAWP return year after year to work on Canadian farms; a movement that in some cases is repeated for decades. This short-term, cyclical movement between Canada and countries of origin is induced through the separation of SAWP workers from their families. Mexican SAWP workers, for example, who must be married or have dependants to be eligible to participate in the SAWP, lack the right to bring their spouse and children to Canada (Preibisch and Hennebry, 2012). In this way, pre-entry and post-entry lives 'outside' Canada very much shape these workers' lives within and, as Tanya Basok (2000: 224) has argued, 'serve as a "collateral" against non-return'. The SAWP has consequently reshaped the Canadian border to regulate access to Canadian territory, labour market and settlement both through space – the 'forced rotation' (Preibisch and Hennebry, 2012) between Canada and countries of origin – and time – the length of stay, which is never long enough to translate into permanent status or access to the services and benefits offered by the Employment Insurance and the Canada Pension plan to which these workers contribute.

In addition to the indefinite exclusion from settlement that comes with the repeated movement in and out of Canada on an annual basis, other provisions of the SAWP enable the Canadian government to reach into its own territory and produce further time-spaces of confinement and control. Once on the 'inside', these workers who, as Tomic and Trumper (2012) note, move across great distance in response to the immediate demand for their labour, are immobilised in different ways. SAWP workers lack the right to change employer and choose the location where they work; upon arrival they are escorted to the farm they have been assigned to and they are returned to the airport at the end of their contract; they are obliged to live on-farm and they have to report their movements off-farm to their employer (see also, Reid-Musson, 2017). In consequence, the control mechanisms of the SAWP continue to shape the post-entry lives of these workers through both time and space, the former shaping the latter and vice versa.

Another category of workers that increasingly circulate the globe on a short-term basis is information technology (IT) professionals. While there certainly is a global competition for these workers, which has motivated many countries to open their borders and adjust their immigration policies to facilitate their mobility, most IT professionals do not migrate on a long-term, permanent basis. Instead, they are transferred between branches within multinational organisations for short-term, predefined periods of time. Some of this movement is part of individual strategies to enhance competitiveness (Kõu and Bailey, 2014),

and temporariness among the highly skilled is often associated with adventure, choice and creativity, rather than exclusion (Raghuram, 2014), Our interest, however, is in how distorted political borders appropriate the space and time of these migrants by repeatedly disrupting their presence on the 'inside' and inducing patterns of circularity. In consequence, they too are vulnerable to forms of exclusion.

A growing share of IT professionals in the UK, for example, enters through the intracompany transfer (ICT) route. This route was established to fill senior management and specialist positions for short time periods, to foster knowledge transfer within multinational companies, and to offer staff in training programmes international experience. However, a study by the Migration Advisory Committee (2015) – an independent body that advises the UK government on migration issues – shows that the ICT route is used increasingly by multinationals, predominantly of Indian origin, to move their employees in and out of the UK on short-term contracts to carry out work for third-party organisations. The ICT route enables these firms to keep a pool of trained staff that can be shipped to the UK when required at a much lower cost than if hired locally.

Intra-company transferees are allowed to work in the UK longer than the eight months that SAWP workers are permitted to stay in Canada. Short-term intra-company transferees can work in the UK for up to 12 months[1] and long-term transferees are able to come to the UK for a period of up to five years or up to nine years if they are defined as high-income earners. However, not even intra-company transferees who stay in the UK for nine years qualify for settlement. Indeed, in line with the UK government's so-called 'hostile environment', which includes a continual drive to reduce migration to the tens of thousands, new time limits have been introduced on the ICT route and, in 2010 intracompany transferees were excluded from the right to settle before they even enter the UK. The changing shape of the UK border has consequently produced a transient, highly skilled workforce that, while being present on the 'inside', in some cases for extended periods of time, just like the SAWP workers, is indefinitely excluded from settlement.

Moreover, while intra-company transferees have rights that SAWP workers lack – they may, for instance, bring dependents to the UK – their post-entry lives are also shaped by their simultaneous inclusion and exclusion in the UK. In contrast to settled IT professionals, for example, intra-company transferees lack the right to choose whom to work for and what job

to undertake. They are only eligible for a transfer to the UK if they have worked for their overseas employer for at least 12 months[1] and, while in the UK, they are limited to work for that organisation and only in the role that they were transferred to work in (UK Visas and Immigration, 2017). Being tied to a specific employer, IT professionals on the ICT route may feel that they lack the flexibility they are used to having in terms of their careers. Thus, similar to the SAWP workers, the intra-company transferees' pre-entry and post-entry lives are bound up with one another. In this instance, a continuous relationship with an employer, as opposed to a family, outside the UK is required for admission to be granted.

The desire to regulate the movement and rights of migrant labour while satisfying business needs for just-in-time, to-the-point labour has helped to reshape political borders and create a transient workforce of both lower skilled and higher skilled labour that is partially included to perform very specific tasks for pre-defined periods of time, often at or very close to minimum salary thresholds. For seasonal agricultural workers and intra-company transferees, it is consequently the rhythmic movement; that is, the cyclical or short-term circulation between places which repeatedly disrupts presence on the 'inside' that shapes their indefinite exclusion from settlement and associated rights.

Suspended inclusion

Another time-space of contemporary political borders considered here relates to a different set of migrant workers that, unlike seasonal agricultural workers and intra-company transferees, are on the pathway to settlement but do not yet qualify for permanent residence or citizenship. In contrast to the process of indefinite exclusion, suspended inclusion is about the pace at which access is granted; that is, how long it takes to gain a permanent status and its associated rights.

Sweden is one of few countries that offers a pathway to permanent status and citizenship for lower-skilled migrants. After having worked in Sweden for four years, lower-skilled workers, for example those in the restaurant industry, are eligible to apply for permanent residence status and, after another year, for citizenship. The four-year period before these migrant workers become permanent residents, however, effectively amounts to a 'spatiotemporal waiting zone' (Axelsson et al, 2017) and although working in Sweden for

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[1] The short-term intra-company transferee route was closed in April 2017.

four years may result in permanent status if all requirements are met, all work permits are in fact temporary.

When seen from this angle, the Swedish immigration policy, which elsewhere has been described as one of the most generous within the OECD because it offers the lower-skilled a route to settlement, enabling them to bring their dependents and gain access to healthcare (OECD, 2011), rather appears to produce a vulnerable migrant workforce that is highly dependent upon its employers. This is because work permits are linked to a specific employer for the first two years and to a specific occupation for the first four years (Government Bill 2007/08:147). Extensions of work permits beyond the maximum initial length of two years are dependent upon the willingness of an employer to continue to sponsor an application. Thus, while it is technically possible for restaurant workers to apply for a new work permit with a new sponsor, to do so is considered a high-risk strategy and workers therefore prefer to stay with the same employer despite often being subject to exploitative working conditions. The stretching of the Swedish border through time; the suspension of the right to choose whom to work for and the right to choose what job to do until permanent status is granted, thus provides a very powerful way of disciplining migrant workers who, if they lose their job, face deportation.

This temporary suspension of rights also incorporates restaurant workers differently into the labour market, depending on their status as temporary or permanent, and creates spatial divisions of labour (Massey, 1995) within individual restaurants and the restaurant industry as a whole. In a situation where employers prefer to replace the workers who obtain permanent status with new, not-yet-permanent, labour, the temporary migration status work both as an advantage and a disadvantage. For these workers, their post-entry lives on the 'inside' are shaped by a continuous exchange between what happens internally and those still on the 'outside' who are waiting to get in (Axelsson et al, 2017).

While previous research has tended to assert that highly skilled migrants can choose freely where in the world they want to live and work and therefore have no desire to obtain permanent status (Koser and Salt, 1997; Kõu and Bailey, 2014), the argument is somewhat overgeneralised. For even a temporary delay of full access to rights may result in a range of insecurities for skilled professionals who are granted access to a given territory on a visa that makes them eligible to apply for settlement only after they have worked in the host country

for a certain length of time (Axelsson, 2017). Just like the restaurant workers in Sweden, skilled and highly skilled professionals who enter the UK on a Tier 2 (General) visa; a visa that makes it possible to apply for permanent status after five years of working in the UK, for example, are required to work only in the role specified in their visa and for the employer that has sponsored their application until they, if they still meet all requirements, are granted permanent status. During these five years, they are only permitted to change employer if they have found a new sponsor and can demonstrate that they meet all requirements of a new visa application (UK Visas and Immigration, 2017). Thus, just like Sweden, the UK suspends full access to the labour market and the right to change employer or career at will for a certain length of time and until permanent status has been obtained.

In that respect, the post-entry lives of skilled professionals in the UK who are on the pathway to settlement, but have not yet been in the country long enough to obtain permanent status, are full of reminders of their not-yet-permanent status. Places where and when respondents experience that their inclusion is only partial include for example airports, where they have to wait in the longer queue and sometimes worry about what questions they will be asked at the border, banks, where their credit card and mortgage applications are rejected because of their temporary status, and in the labour market when they have to find an employer who is willing to sponsor their visa in order to change jobs. A study of the experiences of Biometric Residence Permits (BRP) – an identity card for foreign nationals in the UK – among non-European Economic Area academic staff and post-graduate students by Warren and Mavroudi (2011) shows how the times and spaces when and where these cards have to be produced – for example, when opening a bank account, hiring a car or applying for a temporary job – also act as repeated reminders of their temporary status in the UK. The BRP, they suggest, has redefined the UK border as a series of spaces and, we would argue, times, inside UK territory. In addition to the hospitals, job centres, universities, registrar offices, letting agencies and banks mentioned earlier, further changes to the UK Immigration Act extended enforcement of immigration rules to employers who have been enrolled to ensure that their sponsored workers comply with the conditions of their visa, among other things (Home Office, 2017). In consequence, many employers now function as border guards in a dual sense: they represent at once a port of entry, without whose sponsorship there is no access, while, at the same time, they hold the power to exclude should a migrant worker no longer meet the requirements of access. In Sweden and the UK alike, non-EEA citizens sometimes find that their freedom of movement temporarily is

suspended when, for example, in the periods when their visas have to be extended they no longer have access to their passports and in consequence arre unable to leave the country.

By stretching the border through time in this way, by withholding the freedom of mobility for a specific period of time, immigration policies can act as a blockage to career progression when, for example, academics are restricted to the UK for extended periods of time (Warren and Mavroudi, 2011) or IT professionals in Sweden are unable to accept a job that requires them to travel overseas. Similarly, Raghuram (2014) has argued that, within the medical profession, a combination of the medication registration system and the UK's immigration policies has created career blockages and a large pool of doctors kept in a state of temporariness. The introduction of a work permit system in 1971 was the first in a series of changes to the UK's immigration policy that placed time limits on the stays of Commonwealth citizens. By the 1990s, the career progression of non-European Economic Area medical migrants was limited by those time limits as their three-year visas made it impossible to complete the five years of training required to reach a consultant grade. At times, the suspension of freedom of movement comes at great personal cost, for example when migrants are unable to return home for family emergencies (Axelsson, 2017).

The suspended inclusion of different groups of both low and high skilled labour thus works by regulating the pace at which categories of migrant worker are able to access rights and protections. For certain groups of migrants, their suspension from or delay of access to permanent status means that their post-entry lives on the 'inside' are shaped by a lack of rights that other, settled workers possess and by constant reminders of their temporary status.

Border-Topologies

In drawing attention to the time-spaces of indefinite exclusion and suspended inclusion we have tried to show not just that migrants are differentially included, but that such regulatory ambiguity arises through the times of the border shaping its spatiality in very specific ways. If the 'inside' and 'outside' of borders are shaped by a temporal dimension, one that excludes by displacing through time the right to claim inclusion, then any topological reading of the border has to go beyond simply supplementing space with time. The sense in which time and space work through one another to produce regulatory time-spaces suggests a

topological interpretation where before and after the border help to shape what it means to be coexistent inside and outside of a political community.

At a minimum, it raises the question of what kind of border topology is in play, beyond that of deploying the familiar figures of the Mobius strip and the Klein bottle. As Martin and Secor (2013) remind us, such figures should not be taken as a performative model for all distorted social and political relationships that maintain some form of continuity under transformation. A Mobius-style sovereignty helps us to think through the two-sided space of the border as effectively one of both inclusion and inclusion, whereas a Kleinian set of borders goes further to project the image of an inside space opening out to become part of the outside, a single continuous space bound up with itself. Neither figure, however, incorporates a temporal dimension as something integral to the distorted spatial character of contemporary political borders.

For us, the two time-spaces of migrant regulation outlined attempt just that, specific instances of regulation that selectively combine the temporal and spatial aspects of border management practices as part of a continuous topological exchange, albeit one that appears closer, and more adaptable, to a Kleinian rather than a Mobius-type of exchange.

Topological time-spaces

The ambiguous migrant status of certain categories of high and low skilled workers whose experience is marked by being partly on the 'inside' and partly on the 'outside' of the rights and protections enjoyed by settled citizens arguably has a certain affinity with the notion of political borders as a single continuous Kleinian space bound up with itself. Part of the appeal of such a topological figure in border studies is that it resonates with the experience of there being no discernible inside or outside to a sovereign community, no clear dividing line between inclusion and exclusion. What we have tried to show in this paper, however, is that the experience of an ambiguous migrant status may equally be shaped by the pre- and post-entry lives of labour migrants; not it should be said as discrete intervals of time, before and after the border, but as bound up with one another so that skilled as well as less skilled migrants on the 'inside' may, for instance, only be fully included in terms of rights and benefits after enough time has passed or included for a certain length of time or indefinitely excluded. The times before and after the border, their rhythm and tempo, on this account,

give shape to the experience of being both inside and outside of a particular political community.

Or rather, the regulated time-spaces of the border give shape to such a range of migrant experiences precisely because there are no unequivocal lines between internal and external spaces, nor discrete temporal intervals that separate the times before and after the border. Just as the inside of a sovereign state has progressively merged with its outside, so too has the pre-and post-entry lives migrants collapsed into one another when certain categories of migrant labour are required to demonstrate continuous links to an outside, both before their entry and after their departure to be granted admission. Perhaps the most obvious example noted earlier is that of lower skilled migrants engaged in temporary labour migration programmes, where migrant workers cross borders and access specific segments of the labour market for predefined lengths of time. The transient nature of temporary worker's presence inside a given state territory effectively places settlement beyond reach, even if in some cases migration is repeated over time. For these workers, being on the 'inside', having gained entry and been included for the purpose of labour, is not sufficient to give them the right to remain, and their continuous movement in and out of a given state territory is invariably bound up with their exclusion.

Mat Coleman (2012) once observed in relation to US immigration practices that non-citizens suffer legal exclusion and the threat of removal because they 'are ''here enough'' to be arrested, but not ''here enough'' to address their detention in courts' (2012:419). In the case of temporary migrant workers, that could equally be qualified in terms of duration of stay or permitted length of stay, in so far as temporary workers are 'here enough' to perform low paid work for predefined periods of time, but never 'long enough' to qualify for permanent status and associated rights. In such instances, the political border may be understood as a specific regulated time-space, a selective combination of time and space that places temporary migrant workers in a particular ambiguous position. Complex migrant positions, as such, of which low skilled temporary labour is just one, may be produced and maintained by bringing the times before and after the border, their tempo and duration, into play as part of what it means for them to have a presence on the 'inside'.

On this reading, space, when grasped topologically, may be thought about as something that is stretched and folded through time, not over or by time, so that an 'outside' set of rhythms

directly serve to regulate a series of spaces within a political community. There is nothing particularly profound about such a topological insight, where the sovereign power to exclude and include remains continuous in Kleinian terms, only now it is the times before and after the border that are as much entangled as are a territory's internal and external spaces. The sense in which time may be folded is perhaps a more familiar one, where the memories of the past may be folded into the present to shape the future, but here it is the regulated spaces of the border that are folded through a temporal register. 'Fold' in this instance allows what is both distant in both space and time to be drawn into contact with the here and now to produce the series of ambiguous statuses that migrants on the 'inside' experience. Rather than a nice line in metaphor, the practice of topologically folding conveys the ability of governments to select and combine particular times and spaces previously held apart to politically blur the separation between the 'inside' and 'outside' of a political community (Allen, 2016). In that respect, the ability to include and exclude in a more differentiated fashion arguably hinges on the production of such regulated time-spaces.

As mentioned at the outset, however, mathematically-minded topologists will tell you that they are not just interested in spatial or temporal distortions for their own sake, but rather with the relationships which survive the process of distortion: the relationships that stay the same in spite of being stretched and folded. In the context of political borders, the relationships in question are those of governments able to transform the means by which they differentially include and exclude, whilst continuing to exercise those same regulatory powers. The stretching and folding of borders through time, through regulated time-spaces, as such is one way in which governments have been able to reproduce their powers of inclusion and exclusion from one setting to another, from one point of circulation to the next.

To that end, these more subtle spatial and temporal arrangements through which states regulate the cross-border movement of people and their access to rights are perhaps best thought about as novel forms of topological practice, border-work put into play to further reshape the inside/outside logic of state borders. The construction of ambiguous migrant positions, put together through a judicious selection of times and spaces, in that respect can be seen to represent the latest move in a series of border reconfigurations that have reworked that logic. The deployment of topological time-spaces as a tool of border management to shape access to jobs, benefits and rights for certain categories of higher and lower skilled

migrant labour thus denotes a particular set of recent distortions, not a generalised pattern that has reshaped all borders. It would be a misconception to think that topology can account for each and every aspect of the diffusion and blurring of borders that is often claimed, as equally it would be misplaced to treat border topologies as only ever taking one particular shape or form.

Conclusion

The creation of complex migrant positions where they are simultaneously included and excluded has prompted awareness of the fact that inclusion and exclusion do not map onto the divide between what is 'inside' and 'outside' of state borders. Such an awareness has been accompanied by the recognition that such regulatory ambiguity arises from temporal as well as spatial border management practices. Rather than consider time and temporality as integral to the distorted spatiality of contemporary political borders, however, the tendency has been to treat the former as a supplement to a previously exclusive focus on the latter. One of the aims of this paper has been to show how time and space work through one another to place migrant workers partly on the 'inside', partly on the 'outside', by selectively combining their pre- and post-entry experiences: that the times before and after the border effectively shape the inside/outside logic of borders in distinctive ways.

A further aim of the paper has been show how it is possible to make sense of how the times of the border shape its spatiality in particular ways through the lens of topology. Topology, however, comes with a very specific set of spatial borrowings which are inclined to deploy the familiar figures of the Mobius strip and the Klein bottle. Only recently has temporal borders been added into that mix, although in our view in ways that mirror the above tendency by holding the spatial and temporal distortions of the border apart. With a different topological reading, it is possible to demonstrate how the regulated spaces of the border are stretched and folded through a temporal register, where particular time-spaces can be seen to produce the ambiguity that positions labour migrants as both inside and outside of a political community. In a border landscape that admits no clear line between inside and outside, before and after the border, topological time-spaces offer a way of making sense of particular migrant positions in the contemporary moment.

We have attempted to make sense of two, indefinite exclusion and suspended exclusion,

where, in the case of the former, the short, pre-determined periods that labour migrants spend on the 'inside' and their forced rotation between state territories work through one another to give shape to their indefinite exclusion, and, in the case of the latter, their suspension or delayed access to a permanent status shapes their post-entry lives on the 'inside', denying them rights accorded to other, more settled workers. In highlighting two very specific shapes that simultaneous inclusion and exclusion can take, the challenge now is to explore what other topological time-spaces account for the markedly ambiguous experience that working migrants undergo both in terms of their cross-border movement and access to rights post-entry.

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