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The European Union as a Gated Community: The Two-faced Border and Immigration Regime of the EU

by Henk van Houtum and Roos Pijpers

Living is easy with eyes closed
Misunderstanding all you see.
Nothing is real and nothing to get hung about.
It's getting hard to be someone, but it all works out
It doesn't matter much to me
Let me take you down, cause I'm going to Strawberry fields
Strawberry fields forever.
'Strawberry Fields', The Beatles (1967)

Over the course of time, but especially since the opening of the Internal Market, the European Union has "modernised" its immigration policies, specifically focussing on containing asylum seekers, aggressively fighting illegal migration, and extending European migration policy into countries of origin and transit.[1] The result of this renewed border policy has been an intensified closing, fortifying and policing of the external borders of the European Union.[2]

At the same time, however, in sharp contrast to this policy of closure for some immigrants from outside the European Union, the borders of member states in the European Union are increasingly being selectively opened up for various migrant workers from third countries in order to bypass a growing scarcity of temporary, as well as permanent, labour in these member states.

This need for more economic immigration in the immediate future has recently been communicated overtly by the European Commission (European Commission 2000, 2003, 2005). These two appearances of European migration policy, that is the simultaneous attraction of economically valuable and the rejection of allegedly market-redundant immigrants, are inherently contrasting and incredibly difficult to sustain in combination, let alone manage. In this article we argue that the key term that can be used to connect and enlighten the above-pictured paradoxical and bifurcated EU policy is "protection" (see also Engelen 2003; Hiebert 2003; Jordan and Düvell 2003). In particular, we argue that critically using the concept of protection, starting from its original economic interpretation, could well prove insightful in understanding why and how the European Union wishes to protect itself from "unwanted" immigration of so-called "fortune seekers", and what really is protected on the inside when these unwanted immigrants are kept on the outside.

To this end, the paper makes the argument that in understanding the historical and political foundations of the current protective immigration policies we need to reflect further on a fear that runs through the member states; namely the fear of losing the comfort zone, which entails the fear of losing economic welfare, public security as well as social identity. Against this backdrop of fear, we state that the well-known image and metaphor of a hermetically sealed "Fortress Europe" is erroneous as the European Union is in fact open to strategically selected immigrants who are attracted to increase the comfort. Instead, we evoke the image and representation of a gated community. For, as is the case in the current border management of the European Union, in a gated community the current capitalistic lifestyle of comfort is protected and propagated at high material and social costs. It is subsequently argued that whereas harsh realities of a hostile world outside are imagined to evaporate in gated communities, they continue to haunt the fears of those inside. Fear of immigrants will not dissolve through protection, making the present border politics of the European Union seriously questionable.

The (Op)pressive Desire to Protect

Within mainstream economics and specifically within the dominant framework of neo-classical economic trade theory, protection has long been a central topic of study. In these academic domains, protection is principally understood as a government policy response to the presumed harmful effects of open borders on welfare. Allegedly, open borders and thus, free trade in capital, labour, goods and services, cause a welfare transfer from the importing country to the exporting countries—to the detriment of the national economy and its producers. Therefore, states often wish to issue protective measures to shield their firms, particularly those in newly emerged, "infant" industries, from harsh export competition (Krugman and Obstfeld 1997). Neo-classical economic trade theory, however, has time and again demonstrated that protection in the form of tariff walls and (immigration) quotas instead of open borders and free trade is inefficient in terms of welfare distribution effects. Drawing on Ricardo's and Heckscher-Olin's seminal ideas regarding the (re)allocation of production factors according to comparative advantage, the various neo-classical protection models show that in many cases and certainly in the case of small economies, which are unable to influence world prices, loss will exceed gain (Krugman and Obstfeld 1997).

It is for this very reason that by using this mainstream liberal economic theory as an argument, the European Union in 1988 decided to institutionalise an Internal Market, which featured the opening of borders among its members in order to facilitate the free flow of capital, goods, services, and, most controversially, labour. Moreover, from a non-economic angle, in political philosophy, especially in the liberal corners of this academic domain, the stance on protection through state (b)ordering are increasingly outspoken. Some liberal political theorists and cosmopolitan thinkers have convincingly argued that state borders generate contradictions with regard to the principle of equality amongst individuals and freedom of movement (Carens 1987, 1996; Dummett 2001; Harris 2002; Hayter 2000, 2001). By the same token, the liberal philosopher Will Kymlicka (1996, 2001) has argued that state borders are: "a source of embarrassment for liberals of all stripes, at least if these boundaries prevent individuals from moving freely, and living, working and voting in whatever part of the globe they see fit" (Kymlicka 2001:249). "Any political theory", he continues, "which has nothing to say about these questions is seriously flawed. Moreover, the result, intentional or unintentional, is to tacitly support the conservative view that existing boundaries and restrictive membership are

sacrosanct." (2001: 253)

In critical/radical geography, the openness of state borders has become a topic of debate as well. In a special issue of the international e-journal for critical geographies, ACME, Harald Bauder (2003) argued that from the viewpoint of equal economic opportunity and global justice the idea of international migration controls is not sustainable. He calls for a more imaginative way of thinking where the regulation of the international movement of people is concerned. In response to Bauder's piece in the same journal, Frank Düvell argues that "[i]mmigration regimes are not only unjust, they also create as many problems as they claim to solve" (2003: 203).

Similarly, Michael Samers, in his response to Bauder's intervention, provocatively asks whether we are still haunted by the Hobbesian ghosts of national states. He calls for a non-teleological imagination of a global society (2003: 216). He suggests opening the borders for the sake of creating equal economic opportunity while at the same time creating a global central state in order to support those who are physically or emotionally not able or willing to move. Likewise, in a recent intervention in Antipode, geographer Nick Megoran called for the (re)phrasing of arguments supporting the case for ending migration controls (Megoran 2005). Elsewhere, Jordan and Düvell (2003) have proposed a cosmopolitan economic membership system: new forms of "global economic nomadism" require a redefinition of citizenship beyond national borders which involves shared duties for those who have access and rights for those who remain on the outside. In addition, radical activist movements, such as the No Border Network and the No One Is Illegal movement, which are both growing in size and influence, are strongly pleading for the abolition of border controls.

Yet, at the same time, as Samers (2003) points out, despite the rise of these liberal and critical voices which argue for the opening of borders, there is no existing liberal state, where in effect liberal democracy is combined with the full freedom of movement. What is more, it could be argued that policies concerning immigration and asylum have only become more restrictive as well as "deeply political" in recent years (Hiebert 2003: 189; Preston 2003; Sassen 2002). The new world order shows a tendency towards more exclusive and authoritarian (migration) regimes instead of, for example, taking advantage of the historical opportunity to extend liberal freedoms (Düvell 2003: 201).

What is illustrative is that over the last years, issues of immigration and minority integration have topped political agendas and media headlines in all of the member states of the European Union, thereby contributing to a dominant rhetoric that wishes to oppose the self-made "straw" man that represents the multicultural society. Current political forces have expressed a key interest in controlling the numbers of "redundant" and allegedly difficult to integrate "non-western" immigrants and refugees in order to preserve social cohesion and protect national labour markets within European borders. It has reached a point where a decrease in the numbers of asylum seekers is now viewed as a success. This has resulted in a policy that is so focused on a strict border regime and assimilation that the migration motives of those who want to enter the EU are merely being categorised into productive/unproductive, friendly/fiendish and good/bad, with the direct dichotomous consequence of being allowed entrance or not.

In addition, over the past few years, these debates on the pros and cons of free (global) labour mobility have increasingly become subordinate in the European sphere to what Huysmans and others have called the "securitisation" of migration issues (Huysmans 2000). Although there is no proof whatsoever of a connection between labour market immigration and terrorism, it can be ascertained that the post-9/11 (attacks in New York and Washington), 3/11 (attacks in and around Madrid) and 7/7 (attacks in London) anxieties over global terrorism and security issues have led to the construction of a very restrictive common labour and asylum immigration policy. Surely, not all leaders at the supranational and national levels pursue security-obsessed agendas, yet it almost goes without saying that perceived bodily danger and physical harm are among the clearest and hence politicisable objects fear can possibly possess. In the words of Falah and Newman:

> Leaders are successful in uniting the people around security matters more than any other issue—essentially because the appeal to national security is related directly to the issue of protection against a dangerous enemy and involves the physical survival of one's family, friends and nation. The national threat is translated to reality at the micrological level (Falah and Newman 1995: 694).

Another important impetus which accounts for the recent move to a more protectionist policy under construction at the European level is the pressing desire to conserve what is seen as pure national identity. Depending on the circumstances, in individual member states in the European Union, this identity politics has found new socio-political outlets and performances, thereby often creating a new, normative vocabulary. It could be argued that the pressing and even disciplinary discourse on the need to "communify", expressed in terms like European Union, "Europeanisation", "member states", "Ring of Friends", "Wider Europe", "Internal Market", "borderless Europe", and "European citizenship" has only reinforced this state of abnormality, portrayed by the people living outside the EU and the non-EU migrants seeking jobs or looking for shelter inside the Union. By the same token, there has been a constant search to find the appropriate definition for the non-insiders, the people from outside. Many terms have been used now, such as guest workers, strangers, aliens, foreigners, newcomers, fortune seekers, and in the Dutch context, allochtonen, to name but a few.

What is common in this naming game is that migrants from outside the EU have increasingly become subjected to protectionist disciplining in the name of welfare, security and identity. In doing so, the European Union is increasingly following a modernist logic of (b)ordering, much resembling the colonial mind-set, that involves the making of a divisive order between the self-claimed illuminated, enlightened beacon and an external world of chaos and darkness. The community thereby defines itself as the good life, thereby reifying figures of societal difference and danger, such as the criminal, the terrorist, the invading enemy, the xenos, the migrant (Huysmans 2000). The "normal" ones are the ones born in the "normal" fabric of the so-called

European culture and believed to be a product of an imagined and invented European and culturally homogeneous civilisation and enlightenment which is placed in contrast to the "deviant", the non-native, the immigrant, the one born outside Europe (Benhabib 1996; Jenkins 1996; Paasi 1996). In the present context, and even more so after 9/11, the "deviant Other" is often the Muslim migrant, who is generally depicted as a stranger coming from a pre-or even anti-modern society, a world of darkness (see also Balibar andWallerstein 1991; Derrida 1998; Sibley 1995). By attempting to appeal to and invent a uniform European civilisation and identity as opposed to "other" civilisations, and by dividing the world into members and non-members, which is what the European Union is doing, exclusivity is not seen as a problem but as something that is believed to be necessary, logical and something to be proud of, a political goal worth striving for.

The consequences from having such exclusionary politics is that the "world outside" is constructed as a collective identity, be it termed non-members or strangers, and as different, as something that is potentially threatening the imagined pure and authentic community and tradition. It is this idea of home and strangeness, order and disorder, and purity and impurity (Bauman 1997; Sibley 1995) that is becoming increasingly evident as well in the current immigration policies in the EU. The deviants, the immigrants, are increasingly subjected to modernistic assimilation programmes. To that end, they are bio-politically counted, listed, disciplined, monitored and tested.

What is illustrative for such bio-political classification of the origins of people in the world is the current use of official statistics by some governments. In the Netherlands, for instance, the official bureau for statistics, the CBS, is making a remarkable and bothersome distinction between nationals, aliens, and aliens from non-western countries. Another dubious illustrative listing practice can be found in the list that the EU has made to determine which of the third countries nationals must be in possession of a visa before entering the European Union (Council Regulation EC n539/2001, later modified by Regulations n2414/2001 and by Regulation n453/2003). Here many Muslim countries are listed, thereby singling out these countries as being culturally different. For immigrants from these countries most western European countries now have a citizenship and/or national loyalty test, by which the assimilation potential of the immigrant is tested before s/he can acquire a residence permit.

The Fear of Becoming Overwhelmed

In a sense, what the European Union is doing, via its modernistic exclusion and fear-invoking politics, is constructing and protecting what is regarded as the own internal space where one feels at ease. Protection principally concerns comfort, which is an interpretation and extension of the concept of "easiness"[3] (see also Van Houtum 2003).

The Other, the stranger, is seen as confusing the insider by bringing uneasiness and distorting the feeling of being at home. It is the psycho-analyst Jacques Lacan who eloquently explained that the fear of discomfort and uneasiness stems from the perception of being overwhelmed by nameless but potentially large flows, hordes, masses and streams of the Other that threaten to negate, delete, and empty the own and known world (Lacan 2004; see also Harari 2001). This nothingness is perceived as being overwhelming in the sense that it reveals a lack of space for oneself, a space to realise one's own desires (in terms of economic welfare, public security and social identity). According to Lacan (2004), when *le manque vient a manquer*, when this lack is lacking, when there is too much presence of the new and the unknown at too close a range, then there is angustia, anxiety. It is this nothing that tightens, oppresses the Self and the (material) resources of the Self. Here the Freudian word unheimlich comes in play. One feels endangered, and not at home. The constructed and imagined Self and the (material) resources of the Self represent the stronghold of the Self. When the nothing threatens to replace this unfulfilled Self, blurring the difference between the inside and outside so that one becomes a nobody amongst everybody, the counterbalancing strategy will often be a distance creation, a re-bordering, a strengthening of the imagined unity of the Self, of the border around the Self and the (material) resources that support it. Hence, a border is basically saying, "keep your distance". As a result, a concrete reality, that is the presence of the Other, the Immigrant, is created to symbolise, objectify and to use as a scapegoat for the threatening unveiling of the emptiness (vide, Lacan 2004).

The political imagination and construction of (hordes and masses of) the Other is, as Sibley calls it, a "colonisation" of social life (Sibley 1995). Accordingly, the current spatial imaginative bordering process of the European Union rests upon the colonisation of friends as members or associated members (Bauman 1990), among whom common assets of knowledge and wealth are constructed and distributed. To the Other residential rights are granted only if such an extension of rights does not threaten the existing order (Bauman 1990). The identity of strangers is therefore usually not their choice (see also Bradley 1997; Miller 1995): they are valued on the basis of their other country of birth, colour, creed, religion or culture (see also Urry 2000) and must adjust to the new one's culture if they wish to be included. European society, as Bauman argued, thereby "produces its own kind of strangers" (Bauman 1997:17). The consequence is that an increased anxiety and fear of the Other, or in the words of Sibley "a moral panic" is produced, which in his view concerns "contested spaces, liminal zones which hostile communities intend on eliminating by appropriating such spaces for themselves and excluding the offending other" (Sibley 1995:39). The inhabitants of the imagined terra incognita surrounding the insulating Union are the politically invoked new barbarians from a world outside who are undesirable, the imagined cause of many societal problems and hence, they are denied access.

Illustratively, after its most recent enlargement in 2004, most of the "western" European countries feared to be "invaded" by cheaper labour forces from the new "eastern" European member states and therefore imposed transitional labour market entry restrictions.[4]

This protection of the own economy was in sharp contrast to one of the most basic ideological principles of the internal market EU, that is, free movement. The fear that constituted the protection, and hence the abolition of free movement, pointed to a fear of becoming overwhelmed by strangers, to be *überfremdet.* This embracing of fear in which the European

Union currently finds itself trapped has largely been instigated bottom-up, that is, by the various member states. Just as protection in the realm of foreign trade is by definition connected to domestic industrial and regional policies, over the last few years in the EU strong national "elective affinities" have emerged between immigration policies and those addressing integration and labour market issues (Engelen 2003:504). There is a strong political will to retain national sovereignty over immigration and asylum issues. Despite this unusually powerful and often populist new language of protection, the fear of immigrants across the European Union is generally not grounded in a thorough awareness of the global migration developments throughout the world. For despite the often-used rhetoric of hordes and masses, the EU is only "receiving" a fraction of the total population of refugees or people who are on the move. But this has not lessened the moral panic that is so significant in the current political landscape of the EU.

Selective Protection through Stratification

The consequences of the above mentioned desire for comfort protection are increasingly drastic, sometimes even horrific. For over the years there has been a drastic increase in the militarisation of the external border of the EU, even to the point where attempts to remain unseen or to escape from the hunt and chase by border guards has led to the deaths of would-be immigrants. The member states' protectionism is apparently willing to go as far as making the external border literally a "deadline" by criminalising the lives of those who are trying to find work or shelter in the European Union. Hideously, their deaths are implicitly seen as the "collateral damage" of a combat against illegal migration. These are the "wasted lives", as Bauman recently described them (Bauman 2004). Estimates of "deaths at the border" differ, but many would agree that it is somewhere in the six or seven thousands now. To the many tragic stories of "deaths at the border" can be added the October 2005 fire in a detention centre for unauthorised immigrants located at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport. Eleven unauthorised immigrants who were on the verge of being deported from the Netherlands died in the flames.

This detention centre is but one of many often hastily built camps for illegalised migrants that are present in the current geo-political landscape of the EU. These are the "spaces of exception" for the homo sacer, the illegalised migrant, of today (Agamben 2002). The two Dutch ministers responsible for this detention centre accepted that they had failed in properly protecting the immigrants and resigned from their job.[5]

Although there may not be a consensus over who is to blame for the deaths of these many thousands migrants, the fact remains that these people died awaiting access into or deportation from the European Union; they died in the "waiting room". Meanwhile, those who manage to survive the game of Russian roulette at the border enter a dense web of immigration policies which very much lacks clarity and consistency. It is no wonder, then, that the European Union resembles a fortress to many.

Yet, we would argue that this image of a fortress is increasingly untenable. For the images of people dying at the gates of the EU, which would indeed fit in with the idea of a fortress, are in sharp contrast to the acquisition policies which pertain to economically valuable, allegedly scarce forms of labour. The national economies in the EU anxiously try to incorporate specific labour market immigrants. In one of her earlier writings on global capitalism, Saskia Sassen phrases this intrinsically political nature of economic borders as follows:

> National boundaries do not act as barriers so much as mechanisms reproducing the system through the international division of labor . . . Border enforcement is a mechanism facilitating the extraction of cheap labour by assigning criminal status to a segment of the working class—illegal immigrants. Foreign workers undermine a nation's working class when the state renders foreigners socially and politically powerless. At the same time, border enforcement meets the demands of organised labour in the labor-receiving country insofar as it presumes to protect native workers. Yet selective enforcement of policies can circumvent general border policies and protect the interests of economic sectors relying on immigrant labor (Sassen 1988:36–37, our emphasis).

The often populist fears and forthcoming measures against unsolicited, so-called redundant people are at odds with current (business) pressures to open up the border partially, temporarily, phased or fully. Many European states are simultaneously coping with structural shortages of specific knowledge or skills and an ageing active workforce. Persistent shortages of knowledge and skills and a forthcoming economic demand for those in possession thereof are made explicit in expansionary visa, work and residence policies that target immigrant workers from outside the Union. These policies, by all means, have taken on the form of a race for the fittest, a "battle for gains and brains", with nationally different regulations (De Lange et al 2003). Germany, for example, has put in place a Green Card system directed at information technology specialists. Less explicitly formulated, but following a similar logic, the Netherlands relies on a fast-track work permit procedure enabling highly-skilled foreigners to bypass bureaucracy.

Yet, both Germany and the Netherlands are conservative when extending the length of stay. Spain, by contrast, uses a quota system to control the entry of migrants of all skills, but entitles migrant workers freedom of movement on the domestic labour market after only one year. The United Kingdom recruits managerial and entrepreneurial talent in its Highly Skilled Migrant Programme.[6]

This programme is exceptional in the sense that it is supply induced: applicants are assessed on the basis of a point system (De Lange et al 2003). Common in all recruitment regimes is that top managers, engineers, PhD students, soccer players and the like from "third" countries are all strategically selected by corporations, universities and/or football clubs. In addition, under the auspices of bilateral agreements, temporary labour market access is granted to seasonal workers in agriculture or construction (European Commission 2004b). Hence, in contrast to the "anti-redundancy" and "anti-burden" politics which applies to asylum seekers, so-called "fortune seekers" and illegal immigrants, some immigrants are seen as valuable assets, who are most

welcome on national labour markets in order to gain or sustain national competitive advantage.

This development is received positively by the most recent policy documentation reporting on the implementation of the European Internal Market strategy. In 2000, the European Commission expressed its trust in what is called "replacement immigration" (immigrant labour replacing ageing domestic labour forces) in the nearby future in its strategy paper On a Community Immigration Policy (European Commission 2000). In 2003, the Commission explicitly spoke of an economic and demographic challenge alongside the challenge of immigrant and minority integration in the Union (European Commission 2003). And in 2005, the Green Paper On an EU Approach to Managing Economic Migration, although still circumspectly, argues for a more harmonised system of fast-track migration and Green Cards for the European Union as a whole. In defence of such a system, Franco Frattini, the EU's Justice and Security Commissioner argued in an interview with the Financial Times, that "[f]or the first time Europe is facing not a threat but a possible opportunity to manage in a coherent manner the important phenomenon that is economic migration. We need a new strategy". So, those who fall in the category "high competence to assimilate" or "high potential for an added value to a country" will be evaluated according to their economic need. To that end, the Commission proposes the use of an "economic needs test" by the member states. Interestingly, this test is to be applied to "not necessarily only highly qualified" immigrants (European Commission 2005:5).

In this regard it is not surprising that the borders of the EU have come to stand for a bifurcated immigration policy. This bifurcation could, according to Bauman, be taken as a metaphor for a newly emerged stratification:

> it is now the "access to global mobility" which has been raised to the topmost rank among the stratifying factors. It also reveals the global dimension of all privilege and deprivation, however local. Some of us enjoy the new freedom of movement sans papiers. Some others are not allowed to stay put for the same reason (Bauman 1998:88).

Stratification, or civic stratification in the words of Lydia Morris, is a generic term for the range of immigration statuses that is created by the differentiation of rights in regard to employment, asylum, residence, naturalisation and family reunification (Morris 2002; see also Joppke 2005). By virtue of these statuses, the chances of strangers being allowed to play a role in the arena are higher when their estimated wealth and employment effects are net-positive and/or when they are perceived as being easy and safely to assimilate in the society. In such stratified surroundings, market-driven migrant selectivity is irrevocably becoming a major determinant of migration flows in the European Union and its Internal Market (Favell and Hansen 2002).

Such economisation is an illustration of what could be called a commodification of migrants, by which we imply the tendency to label human beings as human resources or human capital and accordingly to "scan" immigrants as if they were a commodity in order to determine the value, worth and the danger for a community when "importing" them. In this respect, Slavoj Žižek speaks of a de-politicisation of European politics, wherein a consensus about the need to strive for economic success, efficiency and efficacy reduces the role of European migration policy to a mere administrative one, defining and installing procedures and networks of passage (Žižek 1998; see also Deichmann, Reul and ˘ Zi˘zek 2002). Such protection of the national interest and identity (to be amongst "one's own"), and of (the growth of) gained wealth is a clear expression of collective self-interest of the community of human beings who call each other a "member" of a club, in this case the European Union (Ugur 1995, 2004; Hiebert 2003). Club membership offers a lifestyle of easiness, securing the members' comfortable position on the Internal Market because true job competitors are denied access and talented outsiders are conditionally channelled through or turned a blind eye to in order to make up for an incompleteness, a lack, an insatiable desire for more unity and comfort.

Consequently, what we see happening is that the fortification efforts engender what they are supposed to control, namely illegal or semi-legal irregularities. For example, one of the direct consequences of the transitional arrangements with regard to migrant workers from new member states is, as recently conducted research in the Netherlands has shown, that specialised labour market intermediaries, subcontractors and legal advisory firms actually profit from, gain a rent from the transitional border closing through the application of all kinds of circumvention strategies in order to recruit scarce low-skilled labour (Pijpers 2005). The protection wall, the economic border of the Internal Market that is put up to stop undocumented workers and so-called fortune seekers, becomes a source of creativity and innovation: it is a stimulus for rent seekers to find or cross the edges of law in order to let low-rated workers in, and it also serves as decisive location factor for the highly skilled and mobile (Jordan and Düvell 2003).

There are no innocent parties in the construction of illegality. The people crossing sans papiers, the consumers buying illegally fabricated goods, the households and firms hiring illegal workers, the government allowing others to creatively bypass the law, all have at least some interest in the maintenance of an illegalised sector in the economy. In other words, discourses conveying messages about strict migration policies create institutional borders that in turn feed (the very notions of) illegal migration and illegal employment (Samers 2004). In sum, in many ways, the "normative" and even sometimes deadly Fortress Europe is quite open in "positivist" reality for economic migrants through (quasi-)legal and illegal rent-seeking activities (Favell and Hansen 2002).

The Vain Protection of "Easy Living"

So, what is left of the image of Fortress Europe when selective access of economically desirable immigrants is considered? We would argue that, much more than like a fortress, the European Union is beginning to look like a gated community through its selectively protectionist immigration policies (see also Walters 2004). A gated community, a defended neighbourhood, is a form of real estate development increasingly found in countries with large internal income differences such as Mexico and Brazil but also in the United States and the United Kingdom (Blakely and Snyder 1997). Historically, secured and gated communities were built to protect

family estates and to contain the leisure world of retirees (Low 2001). The gated community phenomenon then spread to resorts and country clubs, and finally to middle-class suburban developments (Low 2001). The common purpose of gated communities is the creation of a space in which the nation's affluent wall and gate themselves off from the rest of society in an enclave, primarily driven by fear of crime and the need to be amongst "ourselves", hence protecting welfare, security and identity. Gated communities physically restrain access to their gated territory, and therefore offer an assumed greater level of control over a territory and over those who enter it. The newly created spaces often are "militarised" through the use of cameras, guards, surveillance systems, and other security devices. According to Davis, the panopticon-like screening fits in the larger societal trend of social control and militarisation of public spaces (Davis 1992). In an excellent empirical overview, Blandy et al (2003) adopted the following definition of gated communities:

> "Walled or fenced housing developments to which public access is restricted, often guarded using CCTV7 and/or security personnel, and usually characterised by legal agreements (tenancy or leasehold) which tie the residents to a common code of conduct (Blandy et al 2003:2).

Hence, gated communities express a clear-cut form of socio-spatial insolidarity, of the purification of space, by shutting the gates for the "outside" world under the flag of privacy, control, comfort and security. A gated community is made to produce and reproduce segregation and to pronounce and maintain social homogeneity and wealth inequality. Non-members, usually the non-white—Davis (1992) defines the gates of the community even as a "White Wall"—and the non-rich, are excluded from these spatially bordered contractual associations. Membership is paid for and non-members are labelled guests. It does not come as a surprise, then, that the identity of its members is marketed as a lifestyle, as a status that you buy. In a way, the gated community represents a commercialisation of fear of the perceived and also thereby constructed fear of outside darkness. The gates of the gated community are not only a result of the desire to produce a space for the outsider, the stranger, but even more so a purified, enlightened space for the insider.

One of the world's most widely boasted gated communities is Palm Island. This artificially constructed island (designed in the shape of a palm tree) is located just offshore of the city of Dubai, providing a haven of luxury to those able to afford its exclusive villas and apartments (Palm Island's website speaks of "a unique island experience"). Striking is that strawberry fields-like gated unities like Palm Island are remarkably similar to the European Union's Internal Market ideology in terms of its accommodation of wealth and its resistant, antagonistic and hostile practices to the mobile Other, especially the deprived ones such as fugitives, gypsies, migrants, asylum seekers, and vagrants (Urry 2000). Much like a gated community, the European Union promises "easy living", portraying shiny, happy (white) people who comfortably relax on beaches and bikes. Private parties play an important and increasing role in deciding who enters; politics defines preconditions and facilitates.

And much like a gated community, the European Union has also constructed a bio-politically controlled, monitored and managed external border, thereby safeguarding those who are in from those who are out. The EU, too, has retreated behind militarised gates. The political hysteria concerning assumed hordes of migrants overwhelming our soil whipped up by opinion leaders in various western European countries, as well as the shock of the 9/11 events, has certainly added to the militarisation of these gates. And much like a gated community, new members of the European club are sought after if they are attractive enough to upgrade welfare on the internal market, whereas others are preferably stopped at the gates. Another group of people, unidentified and largely invisible, yet of considerable size, slips through the maze, sometimes with the help of human traffickers, sometimes with the help of legal rent-seekers: they are the ones who clean and cater to the homes inside the community, sustaining the easy living, the life with "no alarms and no surprises" of its inhabitants.

However, protection does not succeed in reducing fears in gated communities, as is convincingly demonstrated by the Blandy review (2003) and similar work by Georjeanna Wilson-Doenges (2000). Residents of high-income gated communities are not "safer", for actual crime rates do not differ all that much from those in non-fenced neighbourhoods. Moreover, the "sense of community" in terms of social engagement is significantly lower in gated communities whereas, strikingly, fears of "outsiders in general" are higher (Blandy et al 2003:3; Wilson-Doenges 2000). Apparently, the more borders are closed, the more unknown or untruthful subjects beyond or inside one's (knowledge) domain are undesired and subject to paranoiac suspicion. Within a gated community, false perceptions of security are gained (bought) and the social bonds between the insiders and outsiders, as well as between the highly individualised insiders, are lost.

Because of the constitutive and increasing fear of these outside Others, the twisting and turning of the window of reality that is easy life protection is a vicious circle which is perpetual and unbounded, yet not priceless. The price is paid by the excluded Other, and by the self-confined, protected but really un-free insiders. For through distance creation, through denial and withdrawal as Lacan would call this act of hiding in a gated community, the EU returns to a state of fundamental exclusion (Lacan 2004; see also Harari 2001). Comfort protection, hence, is inefficient and ineffective, a conclusion very much in accordance with the one drawn by neo-classical economic trade theory when the quantitative notion of welfare is extended into a quality-inclusive well-being.

Strawberry Fields Forever?

In this article we have argued that the debate on the current border and immigration policies of the European Union and its member states, the critical/radical potential of which is so refreshingly disclosed by liberal philosophers, political scientists, and critical geographers, would benefit from a profound understanding of why and how borders as mechanisms of protection are inextricably linked to fear. And conversely, why the issue of fear cannot be reduced to the (selective) drawing of borders. Insights from psychoanalysis can help us to further this understanding (see also Van Houtum 2005). Whilst the EU certainly should not be seen as hermetically sealed, as it indeed allows for selective entry, the notion of gated communities

speaks to what this bordering practice also does to those inside and their ever present generalised anxiety and desire for comfort protection.

Looking at the present European geopolitical landscape, it can be ascertained that notwithstanding the post-modern calls for and local celebrations of heterotopia, the making and marking of borders and thereby processes of social exclusion have not dissolved. The European Union is writing a new landscape of walls. Walls of conservative solidification are being erected that are fierce and terrifying in their sometimes deathly consequence, yet also contain neo-liberal mazes and conscious blindness for specific (illegal) labour forces that help to sustain the ease and comfort. This neo-conservative (b)ordering practice increasingly fits the description of a gated community, reinforcing a conservative protectionist logic to the disadvantage of local and individual attempts to transgress the gated containment. It is a kind of security-obsessed strawberry fields politics inside and cherry-picking outside the European Union which we believe is highly questionable from both the global economic welfare and a normative point of view, as it sustains and reproduces global inequality and segregation, both materially as well as symbolically.

The gated community of the European Union is a kind of never-neverland, as the dream of purity and easiness is never ending. Complete fulfilment or satisfaction is impossible—there will always be a lack, and hence, anxiety (Harari 2001; Lacan 2004). The Self is never ready, never complete, never one, the desire for wholeness is intrinsically perpetual. We are and remain strangers to ourselves Julia Kristeva famously has argued (Kristeva 1991). Perhaps the lesson is that we have to live with *le manque* of not being a completed and full Self. From that lack the Other can be engaged with trust, for s/he is not a category, and s/he also faces a lack of not being fulfilled, not being one. In doing so, maybe, just maybe we might find a way to live and dream with our eyes open.

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Endnotes

1 Moreover, development aid is increasingly tied to agreements obligating these so-called "third countries" to take back illegal migrants, and non-EU states are being encouraged to control emigration more strictly. Furthermore, as part of the European Neighbourhood Program (ENP), practically all third countries bordering the European Union are financially sponsored to reinforce their border controls.
2 In this article we ask that attention be given to the psycho-cultural and economic"securitisation" of the border.We do not zoom in on the closing off for so-called "highrisk" immigrants or terrorists.
3 Comfortare in Latin means "to strengthen", "to ease".
4 The April 2003 edition of the so-called Eurobarometer shows that no less than 62% of the respondents feared an invasion of citizens from new member states. Eurobarometer public opinion surveys are conducted each spring and autumn by the European Commission and consist of identical sets of questions submitted to representative samples of the population aged 15 years and older in each member state.
5 Hence, the fear is as great as the fear among those who wish to enter the EU illegally, for it could mean their death
6 The UK joined Ireland and Sweden in 2004 as one of the only three "old" member states that decided not to restrict the freedom of movement for citizens of new member states.
7 "CCTV" stands for "closed circuit television".

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