

Chapter 12

On Strawberry Fields and Cherry Picking: Fear and Desire in the Bordering and Immigration Politics of the European Union

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Living is easy with eyes closed
Misunderstanding all you see.
Nothing is real and nothing to get hungabout.
Strawberry fields forever.

The Beatles (1967)

Introduction

Over time, but especially since the opening of the Internal Market, the European Union has ‘modernised’ its immigration policy, specifically focusing on containing asylum migration, fighting irregular/illegal migration, and extending European migration policy onto countries of origin and transit. Development aid is increasingly tied to agreements obligating these so-called ‘third countries’ to take back irregular migrants, and non-EU states are increasingly being encouraged to control emigration more firmly. Furthermore, all non-EU states on the edges of Europe are financially sponsored to reinforce their border controls. This renewed border regime has led to an increased closing, fortifying and policing of the external borders of the European Union.

In sharp contrast with this policy of closure for immigrants from outside the European Union however, borders are selectively opened up for (mostly) high-skilled labour forces from third countries in order to bypass temporary as well as structural labour shortages in the member states. This need for more economic immigration in the immediate future, a direct consequence of Europe’s ageing labour forces, is increasingly outspoken (European Commission 2000; 2003; 2005). The internal liberalisation of cross-border labour mobility and moral equality for

1 This chapter is a reworked version of an article published in *Antipode* in 2007: Van Houtum and Pijpers (2007) ‘The European Union as a Gated Community: The Two-faced border and immigration regime of the EU’, *Antipode* 39: 2, 291–309.

‘all’ EU-citizens (and a happy few non-EU nationals) on the European internal market is thus combined with the tightening of control at the new external borders, as well as transitory measures to regulate freedom of movement of the Union’s newest inhabitants. These two manifestations of European migration policy (the simultaneous attraction of economically required and rejection of allegedly market-redundant immigrants) are inherently contrasting and difficult to manage and sustain in combination.

This chapter argues that borders as ‘spatial manifestations’ (following Falah and Newman 1995) of ambivalent migration policy express an ‘ensemble’ or assemblage of fear and are strategically selective to sift and sort the feared and the fearful. A key theme in managing this assemblage of fear in relation to an increasingly paradoxical, bifurcated EU migration policy is protection. Although the term protection is a telling metaphor for restrictive immigration policies, it is by no means new (see for instance Hiebert 2003; Engelen 2003; Jordan and Düvell 2003); however, a more systematic and critical use of the concept starting from its original economic interpretation could well prove insightful in explaining why and how the European Union protects itself against unwanted immigration, and in setting out what really is protected on the inside when these unwanted immigrants are kept on the outside. To this end, the chapter starts by drawing a parallel between the economic protection against free mobility of goods and restrictive measures against (free) migration. There are obvious limitations to such a comparison in terms of economic theory and political reality, but working with the lens of (selective) protection as a means of managing and manipulating fear, leads us to propose an alternative to the well-known, yet flawed Fortress Europe metaphor. Our argument is that the border-management of the European Union and particularly its Internal Market project resembles that of a gated community. In a gated community, a lifestyle of easiness and comfort is both created and protected at high material costs. It is argued that whereas harsh realities of a hostile world outside may evaporate in gated communities, they continue to haunt the desires and dreams of those inside. Fear of immigrants for that matter, we argue, will not dissolve through protection.

Guest Labour and Security Traumas: The Politically Invoked Foundation of Protection

Issues of immigration and minority integration have topped political agendas and media headlines in all of the member states of the European Union in recent years. Restrictive measures against immigration and asylum have become ‘deeply political’ (Hiebert 2003, 189). Just as protectionism in the realm of foreign trade is by definition connected to domestic sectoral policies (for example, in the field of agriculture), there exists ‘elective affinities’ between immigration policy and policies of integration and labour market (Engelen 2003, 504). In one of her earlier writings on global capitalism, Saskia Sassen phrases this intrinsically political nature of an ideologically economic border 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 labor 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 labor 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, 36–7)

Although debates on the pros and cons of global labour mobility have in a way become subordinate to what Huysmans and others have called a securitisation of migration issues (Huysmans 2000), both discourses are linked through the concept of guest labour trauma, introduced by Dutch sociologist Engbersen (2003) for the case of the Netherlands. The idea here is that dissatisfaction with the socio-economic integration of immigrants from Turkey and Morocco, who were supposed to return home again but stayed, is now contributing to the new conservatism in immigration policy. The existence of a guest labour trauma is nowhere more clearly visible than in the transitional labour market entry restrictions imposed by the majority of 'old' member states (imaginable as a *cordon sanitaire*) upon low-rated labourers from new member states. They were feared to come in masses and stay, too. The guest labour trauma, hence, points to a fear of becoming overwhelmed by strangers; of becoming, as the Germans say, *überfremdet*. However, recent research in the Netherlands has shown that one of the direct consequences of the transitional arrangements is 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 from new member states (Ter Beek et al. 2005).

Within the framework of neoclassical economic trade theory, such rent-seeking behaviour is the predictable reaction to a protection wall against presumed harmful effects of free trade. This harm consists of 'loss of welfare'. Free trade (and free labour mobility) would cause a welfare transfer from the importing country to exporting countries – to the detriment of the national economy and its producers. States issue protective measures to shield its firms, particularly those in newly emerged, 'infant' industries, from harsh export competition (Krugman and Obstfeld 1997). Neoclassical economic trade theory demonstrates that protectionism in the form of tariff walls and quota, rather than free trade, is inefficient in terms of welfare distribution effects, at least from a macro-perspective. It is for this reason, using the same dominant economic theory as an argument, that the European Union in 1988 launched the institutionalisation of an Internal Market, featuring the four freedoms of labour, capital, services and goods. Drawing on Ricardo's and Heckscher-Olin's seminal ideas about the (re)allocation of production processes according to comparative advantage with regard to production factors, the various protection models show that in many cases, certainly for small economies which are unable to influence world prices, loss

will exceed gain (Krugman and Obstfeld 1997). Tellingly, however, this ideology and conviction was easily put aside when freedom of labour for citizens of new member states was at stake.

The dissatisfaction with immigrant integration mentioned above has now, at least in the Netherlands, contributed to a dominant rhetoric that strongly critiques the alleged ‘anything goes’ character of migration policies in the past. As a result, current political forces have expressed a key interest in controlling the numbers of ‘redundant’ and allegedly difficult to integrate ‘non-western’ immigrants/refugees in order to preserve social cohesion and protect national labour markets within the European borders. The result is a policy that is so much focused on competence of assimilation, that the migration motives of those who want to enter the EU are being categorised into a mere binominal ‘good or bad’, with the consequence of being in or out. The World Trade Centre attacks on 11 September 2001 have only strengthened the perceived inevitability of constructing a restrictive (common) labour and asylum immigration policy, which is being reinforced by anxieties post-11 September (and since the 2004 Madrid bombings) over security and global terrorism. The European Commission has composed a so-called ‘black list’, consisting of a total of 132 states whose inhabitants require a visa for entrance into EU space (Council Regulation 539/2001). The criteria used for a state to be put on this list relate to the perceived possibility of illegal residence after entering EU-space and the perceived influence on public security. This example serves to demonstrate that there is a remarkable inconsistency in the logic of the member states of the European Union when it concerns the opening of national borders of the labour market among those who are inside the club, and the forceful restriction and protection against a free flow of migration for those outside the club and even for new members.

Borders as Spatial Manifestations of Fear

In order to understand the persistence of (in theory) economically inefficient political protection walls against unsolicited migration, the analysis of the borders of the European Union should encompass the politically expressed societal traumas with regard to (labour) migration. For, we believe that the persistent desire to control, to manage the opening and closure of borders, could be considered as the outcome of fear (Falah and Newman 1995). Below, we will be more explicit in specifying who is fearful, and who encourages and communicates fears. We first want to zoom in to outline what we consider as fear. For us, fear is the emotion of being confronted with negation of the own world, of deletion, of emptiness. Fear reveals the ‘nothing’ and therefore has no object (Heidegger 1970, 33–4; Lacan 2004). This nothingness is overwhelming in the sense of the lack of space for oneself, a lack of the realisation of one’s own desires. According to Lacan (2004), when ‘le manque vient a manquer’, when this lack is lacking, when there is too much presence at too close a range, then there is fear. It is this nothing that tightens, oppresses (*angustia*) the (national) Self and the (material) resources of the (national) Self: ‘Es ist einem unheimlich’ (one becomes uneasy, not at

home). The nationally constructed and imagined Self and the national (material) resources of the Self represent the footing for the Self. When the nothing threatens to replace this (national) Self, the threat that the difference between the inside and outside becomes blurred and one becomes a nobody amongst everybody, one of the most used strategies counterbalancing it will be a distance creation, a rebordering, a strengthening of the imagined unity of the (national) Self, of the border around the (national) Self and the (material) resources that support it. A border is therefore saying: keep your distance. As a result, an object is created to symbolise, objectify and to name the threatening revealing of the emptiness ('vide': Lacan 2004). The fear is given a name, that is the Other. Analytically, then, this existential fear expresses itself in two ways; one, the protection and conservation of the national identity, and two, the protection of gained resources, jobs or incomes or access to social funds.

It is these two articulations as the outcome of the existential fear of the nothing that are high on the current political agenda in the various member states. In the last ten years or so, politicians and media have often played out the card of appealing to the existential fear of mankind mentioned above, that is the fear of being overwhelmed by nothingness. Typical terms that have been used in these parliamentary and media debates are flows, hordes, masses, streams, or even 'tsunami', implying anything from 'tens/hundreds of thousands' to 'millions' of people. Fear of immigrants across the European Union however is generally not grounded in a thorough awareness of migration developments throughout the world; there is no real acknowledgement that despite the often used rhetoric, the EU is only 'receiving' a tiny fraction of the total population of refugees or people on the move. As subsequent Eurobarometer reports have demonstrated, advocates as well as opponents to the 2004 eastward enlargement shared the opinion that the EU-accession of Poland and other countries would negatively affect their home country employment situation.² Highly topical in this respect is the potential EU-membership of Turkey which is instigating a great deal of populist geopolitical talk about what 'Europeanness' is, and whether Turkey and the Turks are 'European' (enough) to enter (Kramsch et al. 2004). In this way, perceptual difference is reproduced and sustained between 'us Europeans' and 'them, non-Europeans' (van Houtum 2003).

Apparently, in the present make-up of the European Union, a pressing desire exists for confronting the normal with the deviant and the self with the Other, a desire that is so strong that it might even run against the potential economic benefit that could be gained from a free flow of labour with the economy of the Other. The Other is feared and 'utilised' to compare with, associate with, or to oppose and to protect oneself against (see also Derrida 1973; Luhmann 1985).

2 Eurobarometer public opinion surveys are conducted each spring and autumn by the European Commission, consisting of identical sets of questions submitted to representative samples of the population aged 15 years and over in each member state. The November 2002 edition shows that no less than 31 per cent of respondents who are 'for' enlargement expect unemployment numbers to worsen after EU-accession. Sixty-one per cent of respondents 'against' enlargement share this view.

For it is only in the awareness of imaginative Others that social identity can be reproduced to be a relevant and contingent source of meaning and experience (Jenkins 1996). This dominant and negative conception of social identity resonates with Bauman's argument that 'each order has its disorder and each purity its own dirties' and Sibley's well-known notion of 'purification of space' (Bauman 1997; Sibley 1995). By definition therefore, a border deconstructs a difference (the outside in and/or the inside out) but creates a difference (a new outside) at the same time. The function of (b)ordering is precisely that: the making of a divisive order in an assumed chaos, an illuminated, enlightened island in a world of darkness. The fear that is being produced, then, is a fear of chaos and dark imag(in)ed by slumps, conflict zones and environmental devastation. As it defines a border between normality and deviance, such defining, making and exclusion of the Other is, as Sibley calls it, a 'colonisation' of social life (Sibley 1995). What is beyond the border is justified to be neglected and to be indifferent about (van Houtum and van Naerssen 2002). In that sense, (b)ordering and (b)othering go hand in hand.

A spatial imaginative bordering process accordingly rests upon the redefinition of friends as natives (Bauman 1990), among whom common assets of knowledge and wealth are constructed and distributed (Giddens 1984). To strangers, residential rights are granted only if such an extension of rights is desirable (though desirability is often disguised as 'feasibility') (Bauman 1990). The identity of strangers is therefore usually not a choice of themselves (see also Bradley 1997) they are excluded on the basis of their other or absent nationality (country of birth, colour, creed or culture: see Urry 2000) and must adjust to the new one if they wish to be included. Each society then, as Bauman famously argued, 'produces its own kind of strangers' (Bauman 1997, 17). Depending on the circumstances in individual member states, currently in the European Union, this desire has found new socio-political outlets and performances, thereby often creating a new, normative vocabulary.

In the present case, it could be argued that the pressing and even disciplining discourse on the need to 'communitify', expressed in terms like 'common market', 'internal market', 'a borderless Europe' and 'the need for European citizenship', has invoked a certain state of an 'abnormality', portrayed by people living outside the EU and non-EU refugees seeking shelter inside the Union, only increased after the events of 11 September. The consequence is an increased anxiety and fear of the Other, or in the words of Sibley, a moral panic, 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). Attempting to make such a categorical difference between EU and non-EU citizens, yet also wishing to stay politically correct, there has been a constant search to appropriately define and term the non-insiders, the people from outside. Many terms are used, such as strangers, aliens, foreigners, newcomers, fortune seekers and in the Dutch context 'allochtonen',³ to name but a few.

3 'Allochtonen' is old Greek for people born 'elsewhere', literally 'out of other soil'.

Common in this name-giving development is that migrants from outside the EU who previously were a subject of social protection, now themselves have become subjected to protectionist measures in the name of security (Huysmans 2000).

At the same time, it is important to realise that politicians at the national and EU levels must not be imagined as mainly reacting to fears of the Other in constructing border and immigration policies. On the contrary, some also rekindle fear. Fear, for some at least, is the means to an end, in this case security. 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 ones family, friends and nation. The national threat is translated to reality at the micrological level. (Falah and Newman 1995, 694)

Consequently, the inhabitants of the ‘chaos’ surrounding the insulating Union are the politically invoked new barbarians from a world outside who are undesired and hence denied access. As a result, the securitisation and militarisation of the external border has been drastically sharpened in recent years, even to the point where attempts to remain unseen or escape from the hunt and chase by border guards leads to the death of would-be immigrants. The defensive policy of the European Union 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. Estimates of ‘death at the border’ differ, but many would agree that it is now between five or six thousand (Sassen 2002).⁴ There may not be consensus over who is to blame for these deaths, but the fact remains that these people died awaiting entrance of the European Union: they died in the ‘waiting room’. This draws attention to the idea that the immigration policy of the European Union presently is in the embrace of fear. This fear is largely instigated from below and strongly resonates at the European level: in the individual member states there exists a strong political will to retain national sovereignty over immigration and asylum issues. So, despite the large number of policy proposals that has been released in recent years, the European Union certainly is not in control in this policy field, a position which turned for the worse since the recent stagnation of the European Constitution’s ratification process. Meanwhile, those who manage to survive the game of Russian roulette at the border enter a dense web of national and supranational immigration policies which very much lacks clarity and consistency. It is no wonder, then, that the European Union resembles a fortress to many. Neither is it surprising that many others regard the EU as a maze or sieve, identifying practices of venue shopping across the internal borders and failing fortification efforts along the external borders due to lack of funds, equipment and competence. In either

4 Hence, the fear is as sizeable among those who wish to enter the EU illegally, for it can mean their death.

case, unwelcoming and even ‘hostile visualisations’ of closure abound (Kramsch et al. 2004, 23).⁵

Borders as Spatial Manifestations of Success

However, we would argue that the idea of Fortress Europe, besides its all too dramatic ring and its geographic incorrectness (referring to the borders of the European Union), is also increasingly untenable. The foregoing measures against unsolicited redundancy and the images of people dying at the gates of the EU, both of which fit the idea of a fortress, sharply contrast with acquisition policies with regard to economically desirable, scarce forms of labour. The often populist fears and measures against unsolicited redundancy and people being stopped at the borders of the EU are increasingly being countered by various (business) pressures to open up the border partially, temporarily, phased or fully. A crucial issue here is the *selective* allowance of labour immigration into the European Union. Many (western) European nations are increasingly coping with shortages of specific (academic) knowledge or skills or an ageing active work force. Persistent shortages of knowledge and skills cause economic demand for foreign experts in possession of such knowledge to be made explicit in numbers of visa, work and residence permits granted to migrant workers from outside the Union. By all means taking on the form of an intra-EU competition for knowledge, there now are Green Cards (Germany), accelerated work permit procedures (Great Britain), quota systems (Italy), and even a speed-office (The Netherlands) enabling foreign employees to bypass immigration bureaucracy. Top managers, engineers, PhD-students and talented soccer players from global south countries all can be strategically and arbitrarily selected by non-state actors such as large firms, universities and specialised employment agencies. In the case of new EU member states, nurses and seasonal workers in agriculture or construction are occasionally granted access as well under the auspices of bilateral agreements. What is happening here is a race for the fittest migrants. In contrast with the ‘anti-redundancy’ and ‘anti-burden’ politics applying to the many, a few are seen as valuable ‘assets’, who are most welcome on the European Internal Market in order to gain or sustain competitive advantage.

Hence, increasingly, the borders of the EU represent a bifurcated spatial manifestation of a desire for purity and success and a fear of the reverse. This bifurcation could, according to Bauman, be taken as a metaphor for a newly emerging stratification:

5 Another horrific illustration of how images of wealth are radiated is the story of an illegal immigrant from North-Africa, who died on the shores of Italy when trying to enter EU-space. Upon being asked his motives for migrating by a television crew, this man’s family answered that he was so intrigued by the glamorous Italian entertainment shows he watched on TV he went to get his share of ‘glamour’.

... 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)

A recent report (Green Paper, 12 January 2005) produced by the European Commission is indeed hinting, although still circumspectly, in the direction of a system of fast-track migration and US-style Green Cards for the European Union as a whole (the so-called Blue Card system). In defence of such a system, Franco Frattini, the new EU Justice and Security Commissioner argued in an interview with the Financial Times, that 'for 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 subject of economic need, instead of fear. Moreover, the European Commission has expressed a 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). In the 2005 Green Paper 'On an EU approach to managing economic migration', the Commission proposes the use of an 'economic needs test' by the member states and hints to extending official entry procedures to 'not necessarily only highly qualified' immigrants (European Commission 2005, 5). Negotiated and still imprecise, it is unclear how strategic the proposals towards 'communication' raised in these strategy papers really are; testing the needs of the moment, and introducing seasonal quota in some sectors only, reflects the whimsicality by which (groups of) immigrants are granted and/or denied access by the member states' national migration policies at present.

In such selectively protective surroundings as the European Internal Market, the protection wall that is the economic border 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, yet it also serves as decisive location factor for the highly skilled and mobile. Favell and Hansen provocatively argue that market-driven selectivity is here to stay. Non-state actors irrevocably become a major determinant of migration flows in the European Union and on its internal market. In their view, 'normative' Fortress Europe is quite open in 'positivist' reality for economic migrants through legal and illegal rent-seeking activities (Favell and Hansen 2002). States can only marginally protect themselves against transboundary, networked practices of human trafficking and unlawful subcontracting as they are, by definition, bounded by national jurisdiction (see also Jordan and Düvell 2003). Slavoj Žižek in this respect foresees a *de-politicisation* of European politics, wherein a consensus about the need to strive for economic success, efficiency and efficacy that goes beyond ideological differences reduces

the role of European migration policy to a mere administrative one, defining and installing procedures and networks of passage (Žižek 2002; see also van Houtum and van Naerssen 2002).

The EU as a Gated Community: Protecting ‘Easy Living’ in the EU

So, what is left of the Fortress Europe rhetoric when selective access of economically desirable immigrants is considered? To understand and better grasp why the border is closed for an overwhelming majority yet open for some, we have to ask ourselves what exactly we are trying to protect in the European Union. We would say that these paradoxical border policies are means to the same end, that is to protect the own internal comfort zone, the space of *Heimlichkeit* (the feeling of being at ease, at home) (see also Houtum 2003). Protection principally concerns *comfort*, which is an interpretation and extension of the concept of *easiness*.⁶ Thus, the interpretation of the national border is the degree of distance creation, of protection of the national entity, of ‘our national interest’. The latter interest is an issue of appropriating and justifying comfort. The chances for strangers to be allowed to play a role in the national arena are higher when estimated national wealth and employment effects of them entering are net-positive and/or when *s/he* is perceived as easy and safely to be assimilated in the national society, hence when the Other is not overwhelming or replacing us. The protection of the national interest and identity (to be amongst ‘one’s own’), and of amounts of money and/or (the growth of) gained wealth is hence a form of collective self-interest of the community of human beings who call each other ‘member’ of the club that is the European Union (Ugur 1995; Hiebert 2003). Club membership offers a lifestyle of easiness, securing the members’ comfortable position on the Internal Market because job competitors are denied access and otherwise redundant outsiders are channelled through or turned a blind eye to in order to do low-rated yet desperately needed work.

Hence, we would argue, that much more than a fortress, the European Union is beginning to look like a *Gated Community* through its protectionist and selective 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 (see also Blakely and Snyder 1997). Historically, secured and gated communities were built in the United States 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). Now 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 and security. Gated communities hence physically restrain

6 ‘Comfortare’ in Latin means ‘to strengthen’, ‘to ease’.

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 are often '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 recent 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 [1990] even defines the gates of the community as a 'White Wall') and 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 life-style, as a status that you buy. In a way, the gated community represents a commercialisation of fear of the 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', www.palmsales.ca, accessed March 7, 2005). 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, such as fugitives, gypsies, migrants, vagrants, and travellers (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 (see the cover pages of two information booklets in Plates 12.1 and 12.2). Private parties play an important and increasing role in deciding who enters; politics defines preconditions and facilitates. Like a gated community, the European Union is constructed to control, monitor and manage its external borders and thereby safeguard those who are in from those who are out. The EU too has retreated itself behind heavily guarded gates. The politically invoked

7 'CCTV' stands for 'closed circuit television'.

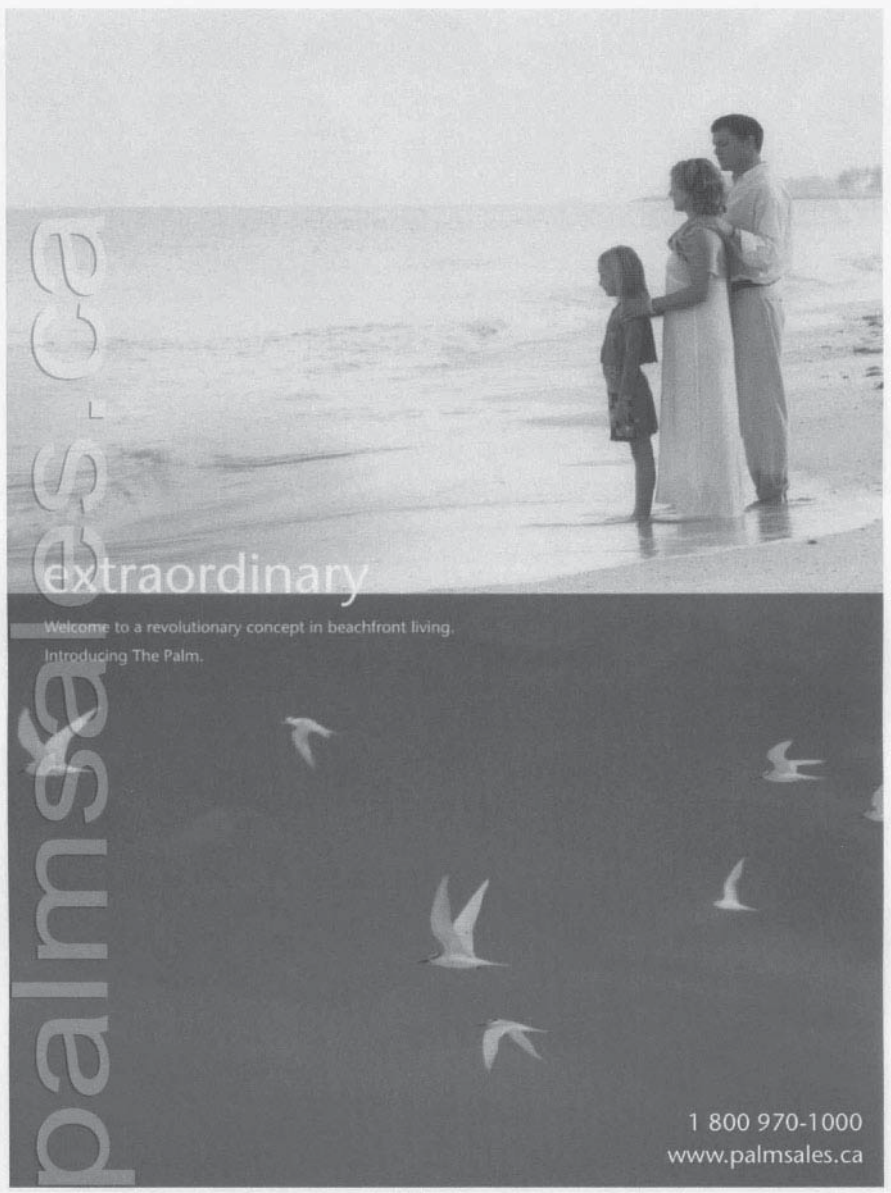


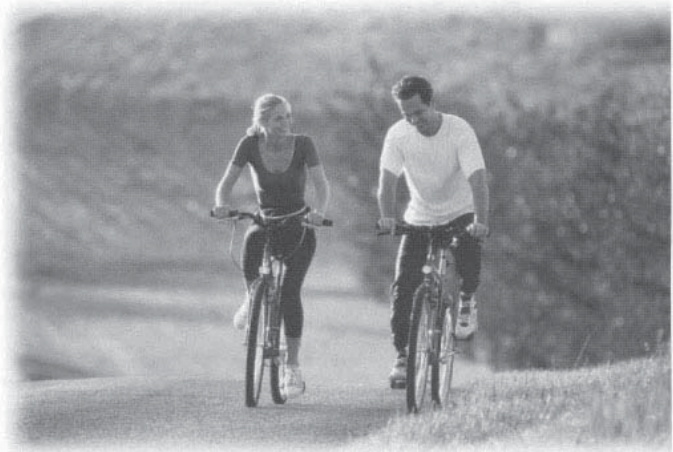
Plate 12.1 Representing Strawberry Fields: Palm Island

Source: information leaflet for Palm Island (www.palmsales.ca, 2005).

Europe on the move

It's a better life

How the EU's single market benefits you



European Commission



Plate 12.2 Representing Strawberry Fields: the single market

Source: The Internal Market (European Commission, 2002).

hysteria about assumed hordes of migrants overwhelming our soils by opinion leaders in various western European countries, as well as the shock of the events of 11 September, 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 the internal market, others are 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, cater and pick strawberries, sustaining the easy living of its inhabitants.

Notwithstanding a recognition that selective admission and exclusion are at the core of communal independence, normative stands on territorial (b)ordering and (b)othering abound. Walzer (1983), for instance, provocatively states that the rule of citizens over non-citizens and members over strangers is 'an act of tyranny'. Seyla Benhabib, following Derrida's essay on hospitality in her plea for 'interactive universalism', is with him on this point (Benhabib 1996; see also Derrida 1998). For, she asks, what is the ethical difference between the right to leave a democratic country, since in democratic societies citizens are not prisoners, and the right for others to enter? Jordan and Düvell (2003) propose a 'cosmopolitan economic membership': new forms of 'global economic nomadism' demand a redefinition of citizenship beyond national borders, involving communal duties for those who have access and rights for those who remain outside. Similarly, liberal philosopher Will Kymlicka (2001) argues that 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' (2001, 249; see also Carens 1987 and Veit Bader 1997). '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).

We would argue that a key precondition for the development of any such (geo)political theory is a profound understanding of why and how borders as mechanisms of protection are inextricably linked to strategically rekindled and mediated fears, and conversely, why these fears cannot be reduced by the (selective) drawing of borders. On the contrary: protection makes fears even stronger, as is convincingly demonstrated for the case of gated communities by the Blandy review and similar work by Wilson-Doenges. Residents of high-income gated communities are not safer in reality, for actual crime rates do not differ. Moreover, fear of 'outsiders' is higher and, strikingly, 'sense of community' in terms of social engagement is significantly lower in gated communities (Wilson-Doenges 2000; Blandy et al. 2003, 3). Apparently so, the more borders are closed, the more unknown or untruthful subjects beyond or inside one's (knowledge) domain are undesired and subject to suspicion. Hence, with a gated community false perceptions of security are gained (bought) but social bonds are lost. Because of the constitutive and increasing fear of these 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. Protection, hence, is inefficient and ineffective, a conclusion very much in accordance with the one drawn by neoclassical economic trade theory when the quantitative notion of 'welfare' is extended into a quality-inclusive 'well-being'.

Conclusion: Strawberry Fields Forever?

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. A wall of conservative solidification is being erected that is fierce and terrifying in its sometimes deathly consequence, yet also contains neoliberal mazes and conscious blindness for specific (illegal) labour forces that help to sustain our easiness and comfort. This neoconservative (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. 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. It is a kind of security-obsessed strawberry fields-politics inside and cherry-picking outside the European Union, which we think is highly questionable from both global economic welfare and a normative point of view, as it sustains and reproduces global inequality and segregation materially as well as symbolically. The gated community of the European Union is a kind of neverneverland, as the dream of purity and easiness is never-ending. The (national) self is never ready, never complete, never one, hence the desire to be one is perpetual. Maybe the lesson is that we have to live with 'le manque' (the lack) (Lacan 2004) of not being a completed and full (national) Self. From that lack the Other can be engaged with trust, for s/he is not a category and s/he is also facing a lack of not being fulfilled, not being one. In doing so, and returning to the Beatles melody of strawberry fields, maybe, we could find a way to live and dream with our eyes open.

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