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Borders as Infrastructure

The Technopolitics of Border Control

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7 Infrastructural Investigations

The List

On November 9, 2017, the German newspaper *Der Tagesspiegel* published a list of all the people known to have lost their lives in their attempts to reach Europe between 1993 and May 29, 2017. The list was composed by a civil society network supported by United, a nongovernmental organization (NGO). Its appearance in a German newspaper on this date was no coincidence: November 9, 1938, is known as *Kristallnacht*, the "Night of Broken Glass," when a pogrom against Jews throughout Nazi Germany was carried out by paramilitary forces and German civilians. These dramatic events are remembered each year on November 9, the International Day against Fascism and Antisemitism. The list published by *Der Tagesspiegel* appeared as a forty-eight-page supplement. Distributed within 100,000 newspapers, the list covered over 33,000 documented refugee deaths. In 2018, the British newspaper *The Guardian* conducted a similar action. To mark World Refugee Day, it published the most recent version of this list on June 20, 2018.[1] It mentions 34,361 migrants known to have died.

"The list," as it is often called, is one of many initiatives to identify, recognize, and remember the people who lost their lives and to draw attention to the humanitarian dimensions of border control. Attention for migrants and refugees, the cruelties of the sea crossings, and the prevailing conditions in the detention centers and refugee camps has been abundant in Europe, especially since 2014. The previous chapters of this book on the Aegean contained several examples. Artistic and activist initiatives have included creative ways to offer support, as well as diverse forms of protest. Controversial attempts to raise awareness include Chinese artist Ai Weiwei posing as the drowned three-year-old Syrian boy Alan Kurdi, lying dead on the beach. Investigative journalism, such as CNN's undercover operation that revealed migrant slave auctions in Libya, have reported on the obscure aspects of mobility partnerships and all kinds of injustices related to migration.[2] Human rights organizations have reported on the violation of fundamental rights, such as by the pushback operations of Greek coast guards.[3] Many European museums and art galleries have devoted exhibitions to the subject, while academic attention to borders, migration, and refugees has flourished.

Of all the initiatives that somehow question border politics, this chapter explores yet another form of peramorphic mediation, namely, the way that borders and border infrastructures are represented and how these representations interrelate with border infrastructures themselves. The focus is especially on academic, artistic, and activist interventions, as well as various forms of investigative media coverage that generate not only awareness, but reveal specific insights, information, and visual representations that mark something about the workings of border infrastructures and their technopolitics. Border infrastructures reveal a peramorphic politics, in which political thoughts and actions are intertwined with the technological means to control borders and manage and monitor human mobility. Border infrastructures create specific political relationships, not only with the people crossing borders who are subject to monitoring, but with those who monitor the border and its technopolitics.

While political relationships come in many forms, the most familiar is the one between citizens and the state. Elections, taxes, bureaucracies, provisions ranging from health care to education, and various forms of registration testify to the organization of this political relationship. In studying border infrastructures, it is not only the relationship between the state and its inhabitants that matters, but between states and people on the move. Modern states have the authority to determine who can circulate within and cross their borders. They control "the legitimate means of movement."[4] States have always been bothered by people on the move, and this shows how modernist planning is imbued with a strong aesthetic component that seeks to make the behavior of citizens visible and entire societies "legible."[5]

The so-called state that prevails in these accounts has seen important transformations. Although the border infrastructures developed by the European

Union (EU) and its member-states can still be seen as instruments to control mobility, they perform this task in ways that have changed the notion of state control—as have many other transnational border infrastructures elsewhere in the world. Borders go where the movement is, and states have followed. In doing so, borders have assumed new tasks and left others behind. Border infrastructures organize a specific political relationship between state configurations and people on the move, just as the way in which they monitor mobility suggests how these infrastructures themselves can be conceived. The technopolitics apparent in these border infrastructures is not just the result of an instrumental relationship or political design. Instead, there is an intimate relationship between humans, technologies, and specific ways of seeing, looking, observing, and visualizing mobility.

The technopolitics of border infrastructures addressed by various migrant groups, their legal representatives, volunteers, artists, activists, and national and international NGOs concerns a wide variety of issues, including the humanitarian consequences of migration; the status of refugees; rights, membership, and questions of belonging; the effects of border controls on migrants; the politics of the European Union and its member-states and the justification of border controls; and the rise of violence, xenophobia, racism, populism, and nativism. Rather than studying this media attention or the social movements and artistic engagements that have addressed borders and migration, the analysis starts from the thesis that there is an intimate relation between border infrastructures and how their attendant political issues are made visible or remain invisible in the public sphere. Stated differently, the technopolitics of border infrastructures is not restricted to state actions; it includes the contestation and opposition that confronts it.

As the chapters up to this point have shown, border infrastructures are not just large-scale technological projects. They include numerous networks and information systems, as well as local and regional initiatives connected by interoperability, which often result in a “bricolage,” a movable patchwork of border control activities. The previous chapters also revealed that the humanitarian border consists of all kinds of initiatives related to care and control, which result in an assemblage in which the construction and contestation of border infrastructures are hard to separate. For this reason, the aforementioned characteristics of border infrastructures apply to the actions of many NGOs, artists, and activists, as well as to the technopolitics of state agents. This is not to suggest that NGOs, artists, and activists constitute new governmental organizations that are part of the state apparatus or embedded in the greediness of the border regime. The presentations and representations of border infrastructures are often hard to distinguish, as their composition is the work of many hands and many eyes.

To explore these compositions, this chapter engages with infrastructural investigations—the various ways in which border politics and its consequences are studied and represented to the general public by investigative journalists, NGOs, artists, activists, and academics. Infrastructural investigations are a form of peramorphic mediation. Critical representations of border issues do not solely address human tragedy, the shortcomings of international politics, and the effects of existing border infrastructures. To a certain extent, they are also part of these border infrastructures, as they multiply the visual presentations and representations of border issues and contribute to their extensiveness. Infrastructural investigations pursue the mediating movements that are characteristic of the emergence border infrastructures.

Reporting Border Infrastructures

The notion of "infrastructural investigations" can be clarified by returning to the list published in *Der Tagesspiegel*. If a play on words could somehow be appropriate here, the list is definitely moving in its presentation of the almost unimaginable size of the migration-related human tragedy that has engulfed Europe and its neighboring regions in the past decades. However, the actual movements that led to this list are less obvious. Neither the movements of the people represented in this list nor the investigative and representational movements of the people who made the list are immediately visible. Meanwhile, the list published by *Der Tagesspiegel*—like many other circulating lists, infographics, and visualizations—advances a factual and causal claim and a moral argument that opens a certain space to evaluate existing border politics.

The list provided by United does not stand alone; it is part of a network of lists. Lists can be considered a technique of governance, a technique that displays ways of knowing, ways of registering, and ways of regulating.[6] Lists also *do* things; they have a performative capacity.[7] Meanwhile, lists like the one published by *Der Tagesspiegel* display an expressiveness that is limited and exhaustive at the same time.[8] Lists make things visible, but they also make issues invisible.[9] One way to throw light on the making of lists is to examine the disputes underlying the subject. Like the study of controversies, the study of disputes can reveal how facts become stabilized or contested and what alternative ways have been considered to represent a fact as a fact.

In 2015, the Human Costs of Border Control project published the Deaths at the Borders Database, an open-source collection of individualized information about people who have died trying to enter the southern European Union between 1990 and 2013, sourced from the death management systems of Spain, Gibraltar, Italy, Malta, and Greece.[10] In contrast to the list by United and other lists compiled using similar methodologies, such as the Fortress Europe blog, which lists news reports of those who died on their journey to the European Union, and the Missing Migrants Project of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Deaths at the Borders Database does not rely on data sourced from news media.[11] News media are unreliable sources of data. For instance, the media do not cover every shipwreck, and media attention to an event may increase, but it can also disappear. In addition, not every news item is equally detailed. Moreover, different media may cover shipwrecks and the discovery of unidentified corpses, and that may lead to overcounting.[12] But the Deaths at the Borders Database has its limitations too. The database records only bodies that have been registered juridically, and the ways of recording vary a great deal.[13]

The aim here is not to dive into the technicalities of deciding which methodology is preferable to count so-called border deaths. Neither will the debatable definitions of borders and border deaths deployed in these lists and databases be discussed in detail. Rather, the analysis wishes to emphasize that none of these lists and databases offers "a view from nowhere."[14] They should thus be seen as movements that simultaneously create specific subjects and objects, facts and spectators. This point can be stressed by looking at other representations of border issues and the kinds of interaction that they encourage between those who see and what they are going to see.[15] Representations of border issues are not restricted to the making of lists and the counting of casualties. As the techniques to visualize events develop, international organizations, activists, and migrants have applications at their disposal to register incidents and to blame and shame states that have the eyes to see irregular situations but refrain from acting.

It is thus not only states that multiply and intensify their ways of seeing and monitoring. The UNHCR, for instance, provides an operational portal that visualizes refugee situations.[16] According to the IOM, "non-State actors involved in supporting, facilitating or reporting on migration and mobility have been profoundly affected in a variety of ways. . . . Non-State actors are increasingly operating transnationally and their businesses and activities are much less confined by geography than ever before. As geography becomes less of an issue, migration processes are inevitably affected. . . . Non-State actors are responding to migration in innovative ways through the use of technology."[17]

Examples of such innovative ways to respond to migration through the use of technology include migrants' use of their own personal devices to connect to online mapping platforms such as Watch the Med[18] and its alarm phone[19] to monitor migrants' deaths and violations of migrants' rights at the maritime borders of the European Union.[20] To illustrate the dramatic events and to gather evidence of the atrocities, George Clooney and John Prendergast organized the launch in 2010 of a satellite[21] (now no longer operating) to document violent attacks, human displacement, and mass graves in Sudan. These projects have been criticized for offering no more information than was already available from other sources, such as the testimonies of victims.[22] The IOM itself is setting up a mobile phone application called MigApp, which will offer migrants access to information on the migration process and available services in destination countries.[23] Other examples include philanthropists, NGOs, and individuals supporting migrants by employing new technologies, including drones. For instance, the Migrant Offshore Aid Station, based in Malta, launched a mission in 2016 that included two drones to patrol Mediterranean waters using day- and night-sensitive optics to send back high-resolution images.[24]

Technologies of visualization are intertwined with border infrastructures. State agents may use the border as a spectacle to demonstrate their willingness to act and to perform their sovereignty. However, it is not just states that create such spectacles. Intergovernmental organizations, companies, NGOs, activists, and migrant groups compete to create images to raise awareness. Europe's migration situation itself, particularly the dramatic events in and around the Mediterranean, can be grasped as a border spectacle.[25] In such a spectacle, events and the representation of these events are interrelated. Border spectacles visualize the agency of states, migrants, and all kinds of civil society organizations. The result is a visual cacophony, a cacorama. The cacorama is not just a visual or representational spectacle, but a material-technological infrastructure that encourages the movement of various objects, including pictures and images. Such so-called border theater can convince the public of the state's vigor in tackling migration issues. But spectacles also fuel controversies and increase the risk of fraud and corruption. As a result, mobility is likely to become a security issue, fueled by crises and emergencies.[26]

Visualizations of mobility can lead to scandals, such as when governments fail to follow the law or use violence. In the widely reported Farmakonisi pushback case of January 20, 2014, eleven refugees—eight of them children—lost their lives when their boat capsized as it was being towed through rough waters. When lawyers for the victims requested information about the coordinates of the patrol boat at different times during the incident, no such information was said to exist. Yet, it is clear that such information is routinely registered using coastal positioning systems and radar technology. All that was initially handed over by the coast guard were handwritten logs by the patrol crew, supposedly read from the on-board navigation system. The commanding officer ordered that video cameras provided by Frontex—used to aid ground personnel to monitor situations and to later provide evidence—had been switched off.

In response to such suppression of data, activists and legal aid services to migrants urge people at sea to use mobile phones and other devices to track their whereabouts during crossings as proof of where they were, and at which times.[27] The event inspired theater director Anestis Azas to write and direct a play, *Case Farmakonisi or the Justice of the Water*, which was presented in Athens and the Epidaurus Festival in 2015. According to writer and theater director Zafiris Nikitas, "the performance creates a performative and investigative arc that starts with the incident, but then follows the legal and personal ramifications of the drowning. Who was to blame for the incident? How did the members of the coast guard involved react to what happened? What are the legal parameters that come into play in such occurrences?"[28]

Multiple university departments are involved in the construction of monitoring technologies and Big Data analysis that can be used to support ethical and legal claims. With its Science for Human Rights project, Amnesty International is stimulating the development of new tools such as satellite imagery for the purpose of monitoring human rights.[29] The Push Back Map documents and denounces pushback operations at the borders of the European Union.[30] The Eyewitness to Atrocities project allows people to document human rights violations by taking photos and videos with their smartphones.[31] Such countersurveillance technologies can be used by migrants to post information on databases about violations in order to hold states accountable and to stimulate public awareness. Examples include the Border Crossing Observatory in Australia,32 the Arizona OpenGIS Initiative for Deceased Migrants,[33] and The Migrants' Files[34] in Europe, a consortium of journalists from more than fifteen European countries coordinated by J++,[35] an international team of data journalism specialists.

Monitoring can also take the form of self-monitoring, such as by the "appification" of migration. Mobile phone technology connects migrants to networks of family, friends, humanitarian organizations, and smugglers, but on the other hand, it also connects smugglers to agents, officials, and their networks. Digital connectivity supports movements, as information, advice, and money can be shared. Moreover, the IOM reports that "real-time coverage of movements and operations enable migrants to access useful information on where, when and how to travel."[36] As a result, migrants create "digital passages" [37] with their smartphones, varying from "mobile homes"[38] to "digital diasporas."[39]

Monitoring does more than register reality and create connectivity. It results in a contest of competing images to prove the legality or illegality of actions. While states tend to deny the existence of pushback operations that seek to prevent migrants from entering territorial waters by towing them away, NGOs such as Amnesty International have many well-documented cases to cite. Like the detectives in the *CSI* TV series, researchers reconstruct the story of an event by applying all kinds of technologies in their quest for evidence. For example, the Forensic Architecture project reconstructed the journey of a boat that left Tripoli on the morning of March 27, 2011.[40] It ran out of fuel and was left to drift for fourteen days until it landed back on the Libyan coast with only nine of the seventy-two passengers surviving.[41] While the question of whether the states involved can be held legally accountable is still up in the air, the reconstruction shows that current mobility management resembles a situation of "organized irresponsibility."[42] The lack of cooperation between countries and the unwillingness to provide humanitarian aid result in situations where it is hard to blame a single actor.

For this reason, the kind of violence conducted under such circumstances can be typified as infrastructural violence.[43] The notion of "infrastructural violence" sharpens the relationship between border infrastructures, violence, and the agentic capacity of humans and nonhuman entities to create and execute such violence.[44] Notions such as "organized irresponsibility" and "infrastructural violence" reveal something about the technopolitics of border infrastructures. More than simply the material infrastructures that define the boundaries of state territories, border infrastructures are better understood as dispersed configurations that seek to organize the circulation of people. Of interest here is their ability to move and how they function as vehicles for political thought and action. The study of controversies often discloses how facts and knowledge are composed as well as contested. Likewise, the study of border controversies can help us to understand how border infrastructures are composed and contested and how they give birth to a specific form of technopolitics.

The Rise of the Observer

Border infrastructures can bring about infrastructural violence. But their other aspects deserve attention as well, such as their ability to encapsulate compromises, as outlined in chapters 4, 5, and 6. The initiatives described here have showcased how infrastructural investigations can be pursued. They shed light on the technopolitics of nonstate actors, especially their capacity to create counterinformation, counternarratives, and countervisualizations by mobilizing various kinds of information, research findings, mixed methodologies, visual techniques, websites, and technical formats. But just like state efforts to monitor migration, they do not achieve the "god trick of seeing everything from nowhere." Instead, they emerge from specific "situated knowledges."[45] These situated knowledges do not necessarily break with the idea of objectivity. Rather, their very situatedness underlines that the representation of objects and facts always involves the drawing of boundaries, practices of demarcation required to mark a specific perspective—even (or perhaps most evidently) when it aims at objectivity.[46] The representation of objects via visualization must be understood symmetrically, as subjects (the public of spectators able and entitled to read objects) are created together with the objects displayed in lists and graphs.[47] The representation of border issues is thus not only about collecting facts, but also about the creation of collective sight. In other words, objects and subjects are constituted simultaneously; the representation of border issues is accompanied by the construction of a particular way of seeing and a particular category of spectatorship. The following discussion continues the analysis of the movability of borders and border infrastructures by paying particular attention to the movements involved in both political and visual representations.

The question that will be explored next is how infrastructures and their representations are interrelated. This will happen by analyzing how representations reflect a certain object, but also constitute a subject, the spectator or observer who sees the representation. As argued at the outset of this chapter, border infrastructures create specific political relationships, not only with the people being monitored, but also with those who critically monitor the workings of the border. Border politics is a morphological endeavor. Borders have a certain size and shape and material extensiveness, but they are visual entities as well. Whereas the previous chapters engaged with border infrastructures surveilling migrants, I now turn to the political relationship between border infrastructures and the people who, in the words of the Israeli architect Eyal Weizman, initiator of the Forensic Architecture project, seek to reverse the forensic gaze to investigate state agencies.[48]

Theories of aesthetics also apply to ways of seeing in security policies, as well as to specific forms of protest in the context of border politics and detention centers.[49] The term "aesthetics" here refers not only to a theory of art or notions of beauty and the sublime, but also to a theory of observation and visual experience and the various visual ways in which technopolitical representations take place. Of particular importance for the purposes of this book is the notion of "lines of sight."[50] Applied to security and surveillance, lines of sight are "lines that segregate and divide, 'dividing practices' that render ways of life economic, make them amenable to management, trading, or exchange." They visualize and open up not only existing situations, but unknown futures, such as through algorithmic calculations. As Amoore says, algorithms "function as a means of directing and disciplining attention, focusing on specific points and cancelling out all other data, appearing to make it possible to translate probable associations between people or objects into actionable security decisions."[51]

Some theories of aesthetics that work well in the analysis of twenty-first-century border infrastructures originate from studying political relationships among people, technologies, and states in the nineteenth century. We thus need to rethink the state, and the aesthetic political relationships among border infrastructures, observers, and those being observed as states today are very different configurations from their nineteenth-century predecessors. But before emphasizing the differences, let me turn to the history of perception and the shifts that occurred in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The transformation that took shape in the formation of states and citizens reveals something about how the public at large becomes involved in border infrastructures. Witness the changing interpretation of the concept *theatrum mundi* (the world as a stage). The view of the world as a stage comes from Greek and Roman times. The metaphor of the theater has been used extensively since the eighteenth century to describe democratic political institutions in bourgeois liberal societies. The metaphor has three elements: the stage on which the theater takes place, the actors who play on it, and the spectators who watch it.[52] While all three constitute the metaphor, the role of the spectators has been emphasized only since the eighteenth century. Although the spectators are offered a full view of the action, they typically remain invisible; at the same time, they are touched by what is made visible on the stage. They are involved but generally do not participate. This distinction between contemplation and action is a defining characteristic of the public sphere: citizens are free to move, to see, and to gain insight, but they are kept at a certain distance—a distance that enables them to create a view from *somewhere*. The subjective perspective of the viewer arose in the nineteenth century from developments not only in the arts, but also in society, politics, and technology. The type of viewer that emerged was the observer. The observer contrasts with the spectator: the observer is not a distant viewer, but rather a participant, conforming to implicit or explicit rules and conventions.

The emergence of this specific way of looking developed hand in hand with new technologies. Whereas the paradigmatic visual technology of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the camera obscura, in the nineteenth century it was, among other things, the stereoscope. But it would be too simple and one-sided to tie the history of the viewer's role to the invention of new optical instruments, as these in turn are embedded in broader social and economic developments. The important development is not so much in the concrete mechanisms of looking and seeing, but in the changing abstractions of what looking and seeing *mean* in the reconsideration of what reality and realism encompass.

The observer in the nineteenth century emerges within a constellation of new events, forces, and institutions, loosely and perhaps tautologically definable as "modernity." "Modernization" here refers to a process that largely coincides with the spread of industrial capitalism and the mass movement and circulation of goods and services that were previously exchanged individually. The observer does not stand outside of this process as a spectator but is immanent in it as a human subject.[53]

But how did perception itself develop?[54] This is best exemplified in the development of photography, which has led, like no other technology, to an industrialization and commercialization of the production and distribution of images. Through photography, seeing acquires a more autonomous character and is empirically isolated from other sensory experiences. The visual emerged as the domain in which political relations take shape. The gaze that both states and citizens deploy in the nineteenth century takes a specific form. This is not the place for an exhaustive historical analysis of citizen as viewer. Nonetheless, an aesthetic political theory must investigate the relationship between state and nonstate actors in a dynamic way. Not only will this do justice to the role of citizens, journalists, NGOs, activists, and artists; it will show that the visual only emerges in the movement of looking and this movement is not one-way traffic. This analysis of seeing back and forth through citizens and states offers an additional argument to view configurations shaped by border infrastructures as political relationships.

The Detecting Eye

The watchful eye has transformed the spectator into an observer. As a result, the eye that watches the state and studies its continuously changing configurations has become a detecting eye. As recounted in chapter 2, controlling the common external borders of the European Union involves cooperation between EU member-states; investigating EU border infrastructures thus implies investigating transnational state infrastructures as well. Whereas numerous historical studies have tied the building of infrastructures to processes of state formation, many of today's border infrastructures are part of transnational constellations that include both states and a variety of nonstate actors ranging from NGOs to private security companies. Concepts such as "infrastructural Europe" underline that international political relations, cooperation, and diplomacy cannot be fully understood without considering their technological dimensions. Throughout this book, it has been emphasized that technologies can function as vehicles for international politics itself. How should the political relations constituted via technologies be conceived? In many cases, it is the ontological instead of the merely anthropological or instrumental relation that prevails in technopolitics. But what kind of ontological politics defines the political relationships among citizens, migrants, and border infrastructures? And which kinds of state configurations appear via these relationships?

The composition of border infrastructures can be examined from the perspective of a detective.[55] How does such an infrastructural investigation take place? An example is the investigation of an innovative transport system in Paris, dubbed Aramis. In this transport system, underground carriages can be coupled and uncoupled so that there is no longer a need to change trains. Aramis was ultimately not built, but why not? Bruno Latour's *Aramis or the Love of Technology* tries to unravel the plot.[56] Written in the form of a whodunnit, the book adopts the classic form of the duo, a wise and experienced teacher/detective (modeled after the author, Latour, as a kind of Sherlock Holmes) and a young student, eager to learn but somewhat naive, who together search for Aramis's murderer. The book can be read as empirical social science research into why a transport system failed to get off the ground, as well as a study of the interaction between concepts and reality. The philosophical detective investigates the transport system Aramis that never came into being. To investigate the matter, the teacher/detective sends the student off to open the black box. Black boxes, just like the information storage devices on aircraft, contain processes and practices solidified into facts. Anyone who opens a black box will see the social, cultural, and economic dynamics that had been locked away to give that fact its apparent solidity.

For Gilles Deleuze, a book of philosophy should be a specific type of detective novel, in which concepts intervene in reality and change in line with the problems. Underlying this is his idea about the nature of the reality to which philosophy must relate. According to Deleuze, the tradition of Western thinking is arborescent, much like a tree firmly rooted in the soil, branches sprouting from its trunk. In contrast to this image of solid ground under our feet, Deleuze proposes the rhizome, the rootstock that branches off in different directions, forming a network that spreads underground. Border infrastructures to a certain extent resemble this rhizomatic structure. This offers an opening to conceptualize the various investigations described earlier in this chapter as detecting investigations. This thesis can be supported by analyzing the development of the detective in crime fiction.

The development of the figure of the detective in literature not only reveals the genealogy of a specific genre, but also points to the relationship between state authority and the watchful eye. Analyzing the role of the detective is thus a way to shed light on the role of the state in ordering society. While historians of crime fiction disagree on when the detective novel originated and how far the genre extends, many books on the subject argue that it makes sense to talk of detective novels only since professionally organized police forces were set up in the nineteenth century.[57,58] The origin of the detective (and spy) novel is linked to the emergence of a specific form of suspicion related to state building at the time. The relationship between the state and the detective is crucial, with the detective novel emerging alongside psychiatry, political science, and sociology.[59]

The detective novel developed against the background of the shift from sovereign to disciplinary power in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[60] The shift ushered in, among other things, a new attitude toward criminals: it was no longer sufficient to punish wrongdoers; they also had to be disciplined to improve. The shift to disciplinary power introduced new institutions such as prisons focused on rehabilitation, as well as new methods of administration and research, new ways of looking and organizing. As the eye of the state metamorphosed, so did the eye of the detective.

This transformation continued into the twentieth century. The transition of the traditional Victorian detective into his hardboiled successor is described by Deleuze, himself a fan of the genre, as a twofold change in style.[61] In a short piece to mark the one-thousandth issue of *La Série Noire*, Deleuze argued that the Victorian detective, of which Sherlock Holmes is the symbol, employed two forms of investigation: the French deductive method and the English inductive method. The hardboiled detective put an end to both of these traditions; stories in this vein make it clear that detective work has nothing to do with the scientific search for truth—it has everything to do with deception. Against the background of an untrustworthy and corrupt police force, what it means to solve a case also changes. It no longer amounts to solving a puzzle; increasingly, it is a question of tying up loose ends. The detective's involvement itself also changes as the case develops. In other words, the sleuth's interpretative and moral flexibility—as well as his affectivity (but not necessarily commitment)—grow.

The transformation of the relationship between the detective and the state leads us closer to an understanding of the nature of the political relationships constituted by border infrastructures. The classic detective in the work of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle solves a mystery. On the other hand, the hardboiled detective does more than solve a puzzle. The nature of the investigation shifts and adopts the aim of unmasking. The detective, however much he might be an outsider, is ultimately a defender of the existing social order as he sweeps chaos and uncertainty away from the representation of society.[62]

This is fundamentally different from the kind of detective work conducted by initiatives such as the Forensic Architecture project. It gradually becomes less clear to the detective how transparent evidence can be, whether situations can be correctly read and interpreted, and whether the trails followed will point to a culprit, motive, or cause. The Greek term *prosopopoeia* can refer to ways of writing and speaking in which objects can testify to stories and events.[63] The Victorian and the hardboiled detectives take a series of clues and reduce them to a clear explanation. They put the reader in a position to comprehend a meaning and a cause and to discover a motive. This changed radically in what is called postwar, postmodern detective fiction—a change that typifies the current political relationship between observers and technopolitical configurations.

The example par excellence of the contemporary detective can be found in *City of Glass* by Paul Auster, the first of three novels that later became known as *The New York Trilogy*. The detective in this story follows a man who walks along a particular route and, in doing so, sends a signal—but what does it say? Auster writes in *City of Glass*:

> The detective is the one who looks, who listens, who moves through this morass of objects and events in search of the thought, the idea that will pull all these things together and make sense of them. In effect, the writer and the detective are interchangeable. The reader sees the world through the detective's eye, experiencing the proliferation of its details as if for the first time. He has become awake to the things around him, as if they might speak to him, as if, because of the attentiveness he now brings to them, they might begin to carry a meaning other than the simple fact of their existence.[64]

The questions at stake here are very different from those of the classic detective novel or the hardboiled detective tale. What is the status of proof through the text? What does it mean? Is the proof direct, or is it mediated by something? Does it lead to anything? Does it form a clue? A clue to what? To a crime? To an event? To a particular pattern in reality? Or does the pattern point to something else? A relationship in which the detective himself is involved? And maybe, is it a red herring, something to throw us off the track?

Auster's *City of Glass* can be read epistemologically (as a reflection on what the term "method" or "investigation" means), semiotically or poststructurally (looking at how meaning is constructed and the role played by references). The text also lends itself to ontological analysis.[65] The route taken by the suspect Stillman creates, as it were, the perspective from which it must be viewed. The novel shows that orienting oneself within reality implies, to some extent, reorganizing it. It opens some cases and closes others, but either way, it makes the detective a part of it.

The Reconstructing Eye

The figure of the detective offers an opportunity to reflect on the relation between states, infrastructures, and events. Detection does not take place from a fixed point: it requires mobility and imagination. Two projects concerning border control in Europe illustrate this. The first is the Crossing the

Mediterranean by Boat project, which gathered the stories of migrants traveling to Athens, Berlin, Istanbul, and Rome.[66] An interactive story map allows users to read and to view the complex journeys of migrants. The second is the Migration Trail project, which displays fictional characters that set out their journeys from the shores of North Africa and Turkey.[67] Neither project simply tells a story of true or fictional characters; each also invites the observer to participate in the narrative by navigating through these stories and adding new ones.

The spectators act by observing, selecting, comparing, and interpreting; they relate what they see to all the other things that they have seen. Politics emerges when there is movement in what is perceptible, and when previously invisible elements of an established order become visible, thereby changing what is deemed commonplace. In this case, politics consists of creating new collective formulations by redefining what was previously taken for granted, by developing new ways of understanding the understandable, by giving rise to new configurations between the visible and the invisible, the perceptible and the imperceptible, and new distributions of space and time.[68] In these configurations, what becomes apparent is "the part that has no part."[69] Something that was kept outside the existing political order becomes explicitly manifest. The visual arises as the sum of power relations, social orders, maps, and images; it is not just an image that sprouts from a perfidious mind. The political order is constantly in a state of legitimizing itself as groups, people, and problems that are not part of the existing political order articulate, form themselves, serve themselves to be discounted, and cross the boundary between the invisible and the visible. The struggle for the political order and who or what is part of it is also an aesthetic struggle. It revolves around perception and visibility and is conducted through visual means.

The visual covers the entire domain of political visibility and invisibility, from slave plantations to the British Empire to the post–World War II military industrial complex. These are not just power systems with specific discourses. Instead, they can be considered as hegemonic visual systems that impose order. The visual is not only a form of representation; it intervenes in the making of orders and classifications that place groups and individuals within social and economic systems. Thus, it is a system of authority.[70] The emphasis on the visual should not be taken as a mere technical affair.

Visuality relates to questions concerning the legitimacy of state power. Legitimacy is expressed by visual means, as it requires techniques of representation to reveal the sources of its authority.

The detecting eye of civil society initiatives has largely been addressed by political theories that are less concerned with the sources of justification of state power than the possibilities of citizens to monitor and evaluate how it is exercised to make people, things, and events visible or invisible.[71] Contemporary citizens require a certain mode of detection to critically examine state policies. Political relations between the citizen and the state are only partially expressed in the representative organs of democracy; the eye is underestimated as a political organ, while a political theory that focuses on visual politics has much to teach us about the meaning of power. As Jeffrey Green says, "Popular empowerment under the ocular model does not involve the crystallization of the People's voice into an authoritative decision, but rather refers to the elevation of the People's spectatorship into the status of a gaze. It is the gaze—that hierarchical form of visualization that inspects, observes, and achieves surveillance—that functions as the chief organ of popular empowerment under the ocular model."[72] For the eyes of the people to see, eventfulness is crucial. Events create political moments and opportunities for people to hold governments accountable, as we saw in Forensic Architecture's investigation of the "left-to-die-boat." But eventfulness also has its drawbacks. An ocular perspective runs the risk of promoting a "politics of passivity."[73] When transparency becomes the most important quality of governance and management, the people are only left with the option to approve or reject decisions made elsewhere.[74] Watchful people are assigned a role in the forum, but institutions remain behind closed doors.

There is a particular relationship between the occurrence of border events and the kind of spectatorship that is—or is not—involved. Events can bind publics to political ideas and strategies, but they can also generate nonpublics. The contest between strategies and investigations to visualize events or to keep them disclosed creates the possibility of specific reconstructions of events. But how should such reconstructions be conceptualized? How do they relate to the particularities of border infrastructures, and what do they disclose about the involvement of state configurations and technopolitics?

The analysis given here suggests that the act of reconstruction can be compared to detective work.[75] The detective is an important metaphorical figure, but it has its drawbacks too. Walter Benjamin already gave a warning in 1938 with his claim that "in times of terror, when everyone is something of a conspirator, everybody will be in the position of having to play detective." Initiatives by citizens to map the humanitarian costs of border controls may turn them into detectives that also act as a kind of border guard. The rise of the detecting eye reflects the intermingling of the processes of securitization and responsibilization described in the previous chapter.[76]

Detectives begin their work only after a crime has been committed. The detective searches in an environment whose creation he has not experienced and, like Ahasuerus, wanders within structures that he has not designed. The detecting eye is a reconstructing eye. Reconstruction, fitting together the pieces of a puzzle to complete an image, is not just an evaluative activity; it always refers to a special event, a critical situation that requires attention. The notion of eventfulness gains currency once "turning the gaze against the state" opens the way to detecting gaps in state architectures and their unfunded responsibilities.[77] It is crucial to the act of reconstruction that the original circumstances are unknown, or at least inaccessible; situations must be reordered in order to make them rereadable. The event happened out of the public eye. Investigations are necessary to find the traces that will lead back to the event and to provide insights.

Reconstruction links control with imagination and vigilance with visuality. While reconstructing politics takes place after the event, this is not only due to the temporal chain of events or the lack of possibilities to influence them. The notion of "reconstruction" also suggests a conceptual discrepancy, in that politics—by using words and concepts performatively to encourage action and intervention—opens a gap between the fixed meaning of policies and how they subsequently work out in practice. While the political repertoires of border politics often turn to the existing transnational framework of states to arrive at authoritative interventions, border control primarily consists of the monitoring and management of mobility, and its political repertoires to catch up with events will likely evolve as well. Under these circumstances, a discrepancy emerges between concepts that demarcate boundaries, define territories, and set limits and notions that address the movement of people and the technologies, agencies, and institutions that must travel alongside them in their quest to control mobility.

Detecting the Infrastructural State

The borders of Europe have created a material, spatial, and conflictual landscape that fuses issues of mobility, security, and secrecy. The intermingling of a material-technological infrastructure with a visual repertoire by both state and nonstate actors has implications for the visibility or invisibility of borders. Border control and migration management enlist numerous technologies and, as we have seen, several European programs have sought to make their applications interoperable in order to improve the collecting and sharing of data, to include more institutions and organizations, and to increase situational awareness. But far from being a seamless web, the resulting networks can be seen as a chain of events—a series of political and technological openings that are somehow connected, and yet far removed from the stable and robust system of border surveillance that they often appear to be.

The analysis in this chapter has introduced another dimension of mediation. Mediation concerns not only the inner workings of border infrastructures, but also the observation, detection, and reconstruction of events related to these infrastructures. As such, mediation is also constitutive of publicization, the creation of publics and public eyes that perceive border politics and turn it into public events.

Borders express themselves at the intersections of territory, representation, and movement. They also intervene in this triangle by transforming its composing parts as border control technologies blur the distinctions between various forms of territory, affecting the very idea of territory by how they monitor, visualize, and represent movement. Technopolitics affects borders in many ways, including how borders relate to representation. Borders are rarely clear-cut representations of political will. Conversely, the visual technologies deployed to monitor and register the movements of people rarely result in uncomplicated representations of human mobility. Instead, the creation of images and visualizations requires infrastructural compositions and compromises of all sorts. The blending of border infrastructures with technologies of visualization results in the emergence of a cacorama.

The question if and how public engagement and media attention can catch up with the movability of borders can be answered only by considering the characteristics of today's border politics. The externalization of border control and the technological external dimension raises all kinds of questions, including the relationship between technopolitics and secrecy in which the key actors include national and European intelligence services, as well as illegitimate regimes, local clans, and leaders. A politics of events frustrates the way that border infrastructures can be evaluated politically. Border infrastructures not only consist of material and informational infrastructures that make up the border, but also relate to a public knowledge and media infrastructure that provides the public at large with information on the political and moral justifications of border policies, their intentions, effectiveness, and proportionality. Infrastructures are thus concerned with the knowledge needed to build and sustain themselves, the knowledge they generate about international mobility and critical situations, and the circulation of public knowledge that reflects on their own workings.

The deployment of information technologies, government cooperation with industry and professional bodies, and the externalization of border control affect the practice of mobility management in the European Union, the checks and balances within EU politics, and its evaluation of emergent technologies. Migrants, NGOs, artists, activists, and academics increasingly deploy all sorts of strategies to contest border control policies and the information given by states. In order to analyze the nature of these contestations, the ocular dimension requires attention once more (i.e., the way that issues are made visible to larger audiences to stimulate public debate). Examples include the visual representation of migration routes and refugee camps, the launch of interactive websites that invite the public to report casualties, online mapping platforms to monitor the deaths and violations of migrants' rights at the maritime borders of the European Union, and visual reconstructions of infrastructural violence, such as by the Forensic Architecture project.

While border infrastructures create events, they can also reveal events or turn apparent nonevents into public ones and nondisclosed nonpublics into eventual publics, such as a publicly visible group of people related to a critical border event. Infrastructural events that slip through the far-from-seamless webs underline the incompleteness of the efforts to represent and monitor human mobility. Events have the ability to shatter glass houses and to bring people, situations, and territories back into the picture. Infrastructural events reveal the composed nature of borders and allow the emergence of a particular kind of maneuvering space, the rise of an infrastructural state resulting from the myriad border infrastructures. On the other hand, a focus on events may lead to a politics of passivity. Eventfulness guides the public eye to events but leaves the institutions—and the technologies—behind closed doors.[78] A focus on infrastructural events should pay attention to agents, institutions, and technologies, and in particular to the way in which they collectively arise via the creation of border infrastructures. A border infrastructure is not a stabilized background or a solid network that organizes circulation. Instead, it is characterized by mediations and extensions; it consists of delegations, translations, transportations, and transformations of all sorts of knowledge, technics, decisions, and intentions. Infrastructural events provide an opportunity to detect the emergence of such configurations and the perapolitics involved.

Public campaigning, activist media attention, critical attention by NGOs and humanitarian organizations, and the interventions of artistic, academic, and activist initiatives have addressed all kinds of issues related to border politics, including the humanitarian drama on the Mediterranean, the condition of migrants in detention centers, the European Union's border policies, and the lack of cooperation among member-states. Various forms of border opposition have shown the ways in which issues are made visible or invisible, with the representation and visualization of border politics revealing the transportation and transformation of the border itself. The technopolitics in these cases consists of the interplay between the visible and the invisible in surveillance and countersurveillance, with the seeing involved always being from a certain point of view and embedded in specific material circumstances. The resulting sociotechnical networks that relate human and nonhuman interaction include chains of associations in which relations are constructed, information is circulated, and connections are made. Border surveillance consists of the combination of all kinds of local and regional networks by way of interoperability, in which information is circulated and carefully reconstructed into representations that create situational awareness and call or do not call for action. Mediation as mediatization and publicization concerns the perception not only of border infrastructures, but also of its inner constellation. Mediation as mediatization and publicization reveals something about the nature of border infrastructures. Countervisualizations likewise point to this dispersed and mediated structure of border infrastructures. The detecting eye may uncover numerous policy failures, humanitarian dramas, hidden agendas, scandals, neglected responsibilities, the abuse of power, and illegitimate or disproportional violence, but its most important epiphenomenological result, which the final chapter of this book will continue to examine, is the detection of the infrastructural configurations of which states and unions of states are a part.

Train station, Hungary, September 2015.
Source: Henk Wildschut.