Tracing mobilities regimes: The regulation of drug smuggling and labour migration at two airports in the Netherlands and Indonesia
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Chapter 1

Mobilities and borders

Regulating movement in a mobile world¹

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Introduction

In April 2009, a Surinamese band travelled to the Netherlands to give a series of performances. At their arrival at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport, 17 members of the band were arrested. During routine anti-drug inspections for flights from Suriname, the authorities had found drugs in the suitcase of a sound technician who travelled with the band, and they now suspected the entire band of smuggling cocaine. The musicians agreed to have their bodies scanned by an x-ray machine that could detect whether or not they had swallowed capsules with cocaine. The authorities found no evidence of drug smuggling, and the same evening, the musicians were released.

A few months earlier, at another airport, a special corridor was opened to facilitate the arrival of a specific kind of travellers. At Jakarta's Soekarno-Hatta Airport, authorities introduced a counter for Indonesian temporary migrant workers returning to their home country. The counter provides a fast lane between the international and domestic terminals, allowing migrant workers to take a connecting domestic flight without having to enter the public area of the airport. Migrant workers returning home had earlier fallen victim to criminals in or around the airport, and the minister who officially opened the new counter explained to journalists that ‘[w]ith specific counters, migrant workers can be protected from irresponsible people and can enjoy safe, comfortable journeys from abroad to their hometowns and from their hometowns back to work’ (Fidrus, 28-11-2008).

‘In an increasingly mobile world, governing mobility consumes greater and greater amounts of mental and physical resources’, Jeremy Packer (2003, p. 135) has argued. The efforts to curtail drug smuggling and to regulate the passage of migrant workers are only two examples of a wide range of practices for regulating international mobility. Each day, people are crossing borders as tourists, workers, students, refugees, pilgrims, or migrants, and each day such transnational mobilities are facilitated, restricted, blocked, or encouraged in various ways.

The growth of civil aviation has greatly facilitated cross-border travel. In 1960, when air travel started to become affordable for the middle class, 10.6 million passengers\(^1\) travelled

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\(^1\)The numbers provided by Dierikx are ICAO passenger numbers. The number of ‘passengers carried’ is obtained by ‘counting each passenger on a particular flight (with one flight number) once only and not repeatedly on each individual stage of that flight, with a single exception that a passenger flying on both the international and domestic stages of the same flight should be counted as both a domestic and an international passenger’ (ICAO, main terms and descriptions used in civil aviation statistics). This means that when the same person flies four times a year, ICAO counts four passengers.
by air. In 1977 there were 517 million passengers per year, and in 1987 this had doubled to one billion (Dierikx 2008). In 2011, approximately 2.7 billion passengers travelled by air (ICAO 06-01-2012), and by 2030 the number of passengers is expected to double again, to six billion (ICAO 2012). Precisely because the air travel network facilitates the movement of people and goods across the world, however, it also transports ‘undesirable’ mobilities. The fear of terrorist attacks has led to increased security checks at airports, and when the spread of the respiratory disease SARS from Asia to Canada made it clear how easily epidemics can spread via infected persons travelling by airplane, new health screening technologies were introduced at airports all over the world (see Budd et al. 2011). All this shows that the regulation of international mobility is a major challenge in a world that is ‘on the move’ (Cresswell 2006; Urry 2000, 2007), and that airports, where mobilities and borders meet, are central sites for regulating mobilities.

The past decade has seen a wide range of ‘solutions’ for managing and monitoring cross-border movements of people and goods through airports, of which increased security and health checks are but two examples. Airport liaison officers are posted at airports abroad with the task of advising airlines on forged documents so that undocumented migrants can be denied boarding. Another example is that airlines flying to the United States are required to send passenger data to US authorities, who use this data for combating terrorism and other international crime. And while passengers on flights from countries that are known to be sources of illegal migration or drug smuggling are subjected to additional checks upon arrival, there are also measures that speed up passage through airport security checkpoints for ‘innocent’ travellers, such as fast border passage programs for registered travellers. Some of these regulatory practices have spurred public debate. International and nongovernmental organizations are critical about the use of airport liaison officers, because it may prevent people in need of protection from leaving their country, and Members of the European Parliament have called the sending of passenger data to the United States without adequate agreements on data protection a breach of passengers’ privacy rights. It is precisely such issues that this book seeks to understand: how do particular mobilities come to be viewed as problems, what regulatory practices have been introduced in response to such problematizations, and what are the effects of particular ‘solutions’ on the mobility of specific groups of travellers?
I) Mobilities and borders: theoretical starting points

Efforts to curtail drug smuggling and facilitate the journeys of migrant workers illustrate the regulation of international mobility as a societal problem, but how can we approach it as a research problem? There are two theoretical fields in which mobilities, and more specifically the ways mobilities are enabled as well as restricted, are a key concern: mobilities studies and border studies. For mobilities scholars, the ‘politics of mobility’ is an important theme, and within border studies a group of scholars focus on the changing role and nature of border control in an increasingly mobile world. What starting points for exploring the regulation of international mobilities at an analytical level do these two fields offer?

Mobilities studies and the emergence of the ‘politics of mobility’

The ‘new mobilities paradigm’ (Sheller & Urry 2006) or ‘mobility turn’ in the social sciences (Urry 2003; Urry 2007) has emerged over the past decade in reaction to challenges globalization poses to existing methods of inquiry in the social sciences. Sociology in particular has in the past relied heavily on fixed units of analysis, the nation-state prominent among them. In an era of globalization, however, people, goods, ideas, risks, technologies, and social networks are increasingly crossing nation-state borders. This has led to the claim that sociology has lost its basic subject of inquiry, and needs to draw up a new agenda for the 21st century based on the examination of ‘mobilities’ (Urry 2000). The term mobilities is used in the plural, because the aim is to understand not only how people, but also how images, communications, and objects are on the move, and how actual and potential movements organize and structure social life (Urry 2004, p. 26). In addition, the concept of mobilities ‘encompasses both the large-scale movements of people, objects, capital and information across the world, as well as the more local processes of daily transportation, movement through public space and the travel of material things within everyday life’ (Hannam et al. 2006, p. 1).

Hence, mobilities studies focuses on movement, but contrary to what some critics argue (see Shamir 2005; Turner 2010), this does not mean that the field neglects immobilities, issues of power and exclusion, and differential practices and experiences of mobilities. According to Monika Büscher and John Urry (2009, p. 100), ‘the term ‘mobilities’ refers to this broad project of establishing a ‘movement-driven’ social science in which movement, potential movement and blocked movement, as well as voluntary/temporary immobilities, practices of dwelling and “nomadic” place-making are all conceptualized as constitutive of
economic, social and political relations’. Mobilities scholars working from a geographical perspective emphasize that the concept of mobility only becomes useful if it helps us to understand the relations and differences between movements, or in other words, the ‘politics of mobility’ (see for example Massey 1993; Adey 2006a; Cresswell 2006, 2010). Tim Cresswell (2010, p. 21) uses the term ‘politics of mobility’ to refer to mobilities being both productive of unequal social relations and produced by them. In addition, he makes an analytical distinction between movement and mobility, and defines mobility as ‘movement plus meaning’. If movement can be viewed as mobility abstracted from contexts of power, then mobility can be understood as ‘socially produced motion’ (Cresswell 2006, pp. 2-3).

He develops this idea in his book On the Move (2006), in which he analyses mobility as an ‘entanglement’ of physical movement, representations, and practices. In other words, Cresswell argues that mobility needs to be understood as consisting of three aspects: ‘the fact of physical movement – getting from one place to another; the representations of movement that give it shared meaning; and, finally, the experienced and embodied practice of movement’ (Cresswell 2010, p. 19). In a recent article, Cresswell (2010, p. 19) has added the term ‘constellations’ to his framework in order to account for these entanglements having a particular history and geography. He argues that ‘at any one time […], there are pervading constellations of mobility – particular patterns of movement, representations of movement, and ways of practising movement – that make sense together and that entail ‘particular politics of mobility’. As an example he mentions the mobility constellation of feudal Europe, in which most people’s movements were carefully controlled on the local level by the aristocracy. Related to this are recent studies that look at the governance of mobilities from a Foucauldian perspective (Hammond 2011; Jensen 2011; Moran et al. 2012; Gill 2009; Newmeyer 2008; Jensen & Richardson 2007; Gray 2006; Packer 2003). These studies focus on how specific issues, for example migration (Hammond 2011; Gray 2006) and automobility (Packer 2003), are problematized as an object of governance, and on the effects of governance³.

³ Forced mobility is an important theme in these studies. Dominique Moran and others (2012) study the case of prisoner transport as a form of ‘disciplined mobility’ that produces subjects with limited agency. Laura Hammond (2011) studies resettlement and repatriation programs for Ethiopia’s poor citizens and argues that people’s movements are controlled in a way that undermines their agency and increases their vulnerability. Nicholas Gill (2009) looks at the mobility of asylum seekers within Britain’s asylum system and suggests that the constant moving of asylum seekers between detention centres represents them as a fleeting population to asylum activists and asylum sectors employees, which undermines the basis for lasting relationships of support (Gill 2009, p. 195).
Hence, work on the ‘politics of mobility’ emphasizes differences between movements – how ‘mobility is a differentially accessed and differentially distributed resource which is both productive of unequal social relations, and in turn produced by them’ (Vannini 2011, p. 472) and, related to this, how movement ‘means different things to different people, in different places and at different times’ (Adey 2004b, p. 502). These developments in mobilities research have inspired Mimi Sheller (2011a, p. 2) to argue that, far from uncritically celebrating mobility and fluidity and arguing that ‘all the world is mobile now’, mobilities research acknowledges the histories of mobilities and the various forms of forced and voluntary immobility. In this respect, she refers to Peter Adey to emphasize the emergence of ‘critical mobilities research [that] interrogates who and what is demobilized and remobilized across many different scales, and in what situations mobility or immobility might be desired options, coerced, or paradoxically interconnected’ (idem).

Despite this attention to the politics of mobility in what can be called the critical mobilities literature, the argument that movement means different things to different people in different places and at different times is no more than a truism if critical mobilities studies does not engage in empirical studies of these differences. In this respect, the lack of attention, both theoretical and empirical, for particular ways of regulating various mobilities is striking. One of the reasons for this neglect may be that mobilities scholars generally pay more attention to how mobility is produced, organized and enabled than to how it is controlled, impeded and restricted. In order to understand mobility in a larger context, scholars have used concepts such as mobility systems, passages, and constellations. Urry (2007, p.12), for example, investigates the mobility systems that ‘enable [my emphasis] the movement of people, ideas and information from place to place, person to person, event to event’ and their implications. Urry argues that each movement presupposes a system that makes movement possible, and his examples of mobility systems range from sea shipping, to the car system, websites, budget air travel, and networked computers. Because in Urry’s work a mobility system is understood to ‘permit predictable and relatively risk-free repetition of the movement in question’ (idem, p. 13), he seems to pay less attention to the fact that systems may also control, restrict, or inhibit movement.

There are also studies focusing on the politics of mobility systems. Jensen and Richardson (2008), for example, studied how in the new Bangkok Sky Train a (imagined) mobile subject – an elite traveller – was constructed, and Graham and Marvin (2001) argue that infrastructures such as toll roads facilitate connections between some users and places, but exclude others. Other studies focus on how different actors with different network capital
(Urry 2007) – or, as Kaufmann (2002) terms it, motility – are positioned in relation to these mobility systems. Hence, the politics of these systems is studied in terms of how these systems produce inclusions and exclusions, and different mobile subject types.

Like Urry, Peter Peters (2006; Peters et al. 2010) focuses on how mobility is socially and materially organized, but he emphasizes the continuous effort this requires. Peters analyses mobility as travel practices requiring the active construction of passages. The construction of a passage can be seen in at least three ways: as creating heterogeneous orders; as planning and repairing these orders; and as including and excluding people, places and times from these orders (Peters 2006, p. 69). His study of the construction of passages includes a diverse range of cases, from the excursions by steamships and steam trains arranged by Thomas Cook, to car travel in national parks in the United States in the 1950s, to commercial flights at Schiphol Airport in the Netherlands. In his understanding of ‘passage’, Peters emphasizes the ‘work’ that needs to be done by different actors in order to create passages that allow people to travel. He shows that travel requires a lot of coordination before a journey can be made, as well as ‘repair’ during the journey. Here too, though, Peters studies mobility by analysing how travel is made possible rather than how it is restricted or impeded.

Tim Cresswell’s work is an exception to the tendency to focus on the facilitation of mobility. Alongside efforts to enable mobility, he explores efforts to restrict mobility at levels ranging from the body to the international scale. His 2006 book includes a chapter on Frederick Taylor’s attempts to regulate the bodily mobility of workers, and a chapter on the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 that prohibited newly arriving Chinese labourers from entering the United States. In his later work on mobility constellations, Cresswell notes that constellations entail particular modes of control and regulation. Referring to Virilio, he argues that contemporary regulation of mobility is increasingly dromological, in the sense that it is about regulating differing capacities to move, or in other words, that it ‘concerns the power to stop and put into motion, to incarcerate and accelerate objects and people’ (Cresswell 2010, p. 28), but he does not elaborate on this. In a progress report on mobilities studies Cresswell even identifies borders as ‘a key consideration for research into mobilities’ and for thinking about how mobilities are resisted and regulated (2012, p. 649). Yet there has been very little engagement of mobilities scholars in debates about borders. How do border scholars themselves engage with the theme of borders in a mobile world?
Border studies and the changing role of borders in a mobile world

In general, border scholars do not situate themselves within the mobilities paradigm, but theories and debates about networks and mobilities have definitely influenced their theorizing about borders (Rumford 2006). Where early globalization theorists argued that globalization would lead to a ‘borderless world’ (Ohmae 1990), border scholars are eager to show how the economic liberalization of borders is accompanied by practices of ‘rebordering’ aimed at restricting the movement of terrorists, smugglers, and unauthorized migrants (Andreas 2003). However, according to border scholar Chris Rumford (2006), these notions of borders as either disappearing or being reinforced do not help us to understand the complex meaning of contemporary borders. A recent and growing body of literature by ‘critical border scholars’ (Parker et al. 2009) explicitly seeks to understand the ways diverse mobilities are regulated at the border, and the different aspects of the changing role and nature of those borders.

First, there is increasing recognition of the view that borders are not just impediments to mobility, but that they also enable and facilitate mobility. Instead of seeing borders as barriers or walls, they are now understood as filters or firewalls (Walters 2006) that differentiate mobility, blocking risky or undesirable movement, while encouraging or speeding up desirable movement. Nancy Wonders (2006) describes the construction of the border as semi-permeable: welcoming the border crossing of tourists, while restricting the border crossing of migrants. For these reasons, Cunningham and Heyman see borders as particularly suitable sites for examining the unequal capabilities and rights of movement of different social groups. Borders, they argue, are sites of production and reproduction of social inequalities, and such inequalities are ‘not just a matter of allocating movement rights to pre-existing groups, but actually politically constructing such groups’ (2004, p. 295). Hence, seeing the border as a filter makes it a vantage point from which to examine mobility and difference.

Second, border scholars are paying increasing attention to the involvement of non-state actors in border control. Citizens engage in ‘borderwork’ (Vaughan-Williams 2008): encouraged by government anti-terrorism campaigns, they are on the lookout for potential terrorists in such locations as railway stations and buses. Private parties too play a role in border security, for example, when airlines are required to check the validity of travel

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4 Border scholarship is multi-disciplinary, including contributions from fields such as geography, sociology, anthropology, international relations, and cultural studies, and focuses on different types of borders and bordering (see for example Newman 2006). In this chapter, however, I engage in particular with the subfield of ‘critical’ border studies.
documents. In fact, as Gallya Lahav (2008, p. 78) argues, a whole range of actors ‘including airlines, transport companies, travel agencies, employer groups, and also foreign states have been co-opted in an extended regulatory framework of migration and border control’.

Third, and related to the involvement of non-state actors in border control, there is the notion that borders are shifting to different places both outside the territory of a nation-state and within a society. The visa regime is analysed as a ‘delocalization’ of the border function (Salter 2006) as it allows states to screen people who have not yet reached the state’s territory. ID checks in public spaces and the ‘borderwork’ performed by citizens shift the border to various places inside the nation-state’s territory. Most authors view this shifting of the border from the vantage point of the state or region seeking to manage incoming mobilities, and label it accordingly. Bigo and Guild (2005) use the term ‘policing at a distance’ in discussing how decisions about access to the European Union are made at consulates and embassies abroad, rather than at the time travellers present themselves at the physical border. Virginie Guiraudon uses Aristide Zolberg’s term ‘remote control’ (Zolberg 2003) to describe measures aimed at preventing aspiring migrants or asylum seekers from reaching the territory of the European Union. These measures include visa regimes, carrier sanctions, and international collaboration with sending and transit countries (Guiraudon 2006, p. 81). And Vaughan-Williams writes of ‘offshore’ bordering practices as quite literally ‘exporting’ the border to overseas territories, but also as a form of controlling movement that is not related to territory but instead is ‘more electronic, invisible, and ephemeral’ (Vaughan-Williams 2010, p. 1073). The key notion in these discussions of the shifting border is that the border is no longer necessarily attached to a particular place (the territorial boundaries of the state) but that the border materializes wherever bordering practices take place (see Johnson et al. 2011).

Some scholars take this view one step further and argue that the border itself is as mobile as the people, goods, and services it seeks to control (Vaughan-Williams 2010; Weber 2006). As an example of Britain’s ‘mobile borders’, Rumford (2006) mentions the presence of British immigration officials in the Eurostar terminals in Brussels. With these officials checking the documents of travellers to the UK, Britain can be said to have moved its border to Belgium. This understanding of the border as spatially mobile has obvious parallels with terms like ‘delocalization’ or ‘remote control’: borders are moving to reach out to people en route (Mountz in Johnson et al. 2011) and to potential travellers. With the co-opting of transport companies in border control, however, the border can also be said to have spread throughout the transport network (Walters 2006; Pallitto & Heyman 2008). William Walters
argues that when truckers carry out immigration checks, the border becomes even more mobile and dispersed than terms such as relocation or remote control would suggest. As he argues, ‘the entire road transportation system becomes a kind of networked border. The border transforms into a mobile, non-contiguous zone materializing at the very surface of the truck and every place it stops’ (Walters 2006, p. 195). Similarly he argues that ‘carrier sanctions [...] aspire to project a regime of surveillance into the very capillaries of [Europe’s roadways]’ (idem). With border control practices taking place in trucks, airplanes, and ships, and at parking lots, airports, and harbours, Mark Salter (2004b, p. 80) proposes to see the border not as a line, but as a network of ports of entry, including sea ports, airports, and train stations (see also Heyman 2004). In the context of asylum seeking, Alison Mountz (2011, p. 332) argues that ports of entry can be mobile too, materializing at the various places where authorities and asylum seekers encounter each other. She suggests that ports of entry move inland when people without documents can be arrested at train and bus stations and subsequently detained and deported. Ports of entry also emerge offshore to preclude entry, as in the case of Australia’s ‘Pacific solution’, in which boats carrying potential asylum seekers en route to Australia are intercepted and sent to Pacific islands where people have no right to claim asylum.

Other scholars take the moving body as a site from which to view the border. According to Elspeth Guild (2001, p. 67), ‘[t]o understand where the borders are one needs to examine where an individual by the action of movement causes the control to take place.’ The borders that travellers meet can vary:

Depending on whether the individual has the nationality of a Member State of the [European] Union, a third country, a country subject to a visa obligation, he or she will not meet any border, will meet it only once or twice on the territory of the arrival country, or will meet it within his or her home state at the consulate and at the airline counter (Bigo and Guild 2005, p. 234).

Although in this account it is still the traveller who encounters the border located at specific places, Louise Amoore (2006, p. 338) argues that the use of biometrics actually inscribes the border in bodies. This makes the biometric border a portable border, carried by mobile bodies. In these studies, borders are literally on the move when bodies and means of transport are seen as their ‘carriers’.
Of course an important question is how much of this is new (see also Walter 2006). Have borders acquired new functions and a new constitution, or is it not the borders that are changing, but rather a changing way of understanding borders that we see here? I think both claims are partly true. Some scholars stress historical continuities, such as the strong role of the state in border control (see O’Dowd 2010), and argue that the ‘changes’ critical border scholars identify are only marginal ones. The function of the border as a filter, and the involvement of non-state actors in border control, may indeed not be completely new (Walters 2006; Zolberg 2003), but critical border scholars do agree that the scale and importance of these border practices is growing, and by coining such terms as ‘mobile borders’, seek to understand these developments from the vantage point of mobility as much as location. As Rumford (2006, p. 164) argues, ‘[i]ncreased mobility in society (and between nation-states) requires new borders to regulate forms of activity which old-style territorial borders cannot achieve’.

In summary, mobilities studies and border studies offer a number of theoretical starting points for understanding contemporary modes of regulating international mobilities. Despite the increasing attention for the politics of mobilities in critical mobilities studies, however, the regulation of mobility is an underexplored theme. So, notwithstanding Cresswell’s efforts to further develop critical mobilities studies conceptually, I argue that for a better understanding of regulation, critical mobilities studies needs to incorporate border scholars’ reconceptualization of borders and bordering. Critical border scholars ask questions such as ‘where and when does bordering take place?’, ‘what actors are involved in it?’ and ‘how does bordering produce inequalities, or more generally, differential mobilities?’ In my research, however, my goal is not to identify changes in the border as such, but to understand different ways of regulating mobilities. In that sense, it is important to note that bordering cannot be equated with regulation of mobilities, because the latter is a broader term and may also include the regulation of bodily movement, or regulation at other sites than the border. In order to analyse the regulation of mobilities, I argue we need a theoretical framework that allows us to take a critical mobilities perspective while incorporating insights from the subfield of critical border studies. What concept could help us move away from studying either mobilities or borders per se, and instead focus on how mobilities are regulated?
II) Introducing the mobilities regime

In recent work, the term mobility regime has occasionally been used to mean the regulation of international movement (Salter 2006, 2004a; Turner 2007; Xiang 2007; Kesselring & Vogl 2010; Nyiri 2010; Sheller 2010). Ronen Shamir uses the term in criticizing theories of mobilities and flows by arguing that processes of globalization ‘also produce “their own” [...] principles of closure’ through an emergent ‘global mobility regime’ that ‘prevents movement and blocks access’ (Shamir 2005, p. 199). The engine of this mobility regime is a ‘paradigm of suspicion’ that categorizes individuals and groups on the basis of perceived threats and risks and determines who can be allowed to move (idem). Turner (2007) elaborates on this argument but notes that what Shamir is talking about is actually an ‘immobility regime’: ‘while there may be an increasing global flow of goods and services, there is emerging a parallel “immobility regime” exercising surveillance and control over migrants, refugees and other aliens’ (idem, p. 289). Whether they label the regime as one of mobility or immobility, both authors see it in terms of processes of blocking and containing mobility by physical barriers such as fences and borders, and by screening mechanisms to identify risky persons.

In addition to these more theoretically inspired investigations, several authors have analysed what they call ‘the contemporary global mobility regime’ as an empirical phenomenon (Salter 2006, 2004a; Koslowski 2012). Although they use the term ‘global mobility regime’, these authors note that there is currently no international legal regime for managing international mobility. Salter therefore argues that the contemporary global mobility regime is a diffuse regulatory system. It is ‘a patchwork of national regulations, carrier requirements, and international protocols’ (Salter 2004a, p. 177). Koslowski examines three sets of what he calls global mobility regimes: international collaboration in the international refugee regime, the emerging travel regime, and a potential international labour migration regime. He investigates interactions between these regimes in order to find out whether an overarching global mobility regime is emerging. Budd et al. (2011) too present their analysis of health security regimes for ‘infectious diseases mobility’ (idem, p. 268) as a contribution to the debate on global mobility regimes, but do not elaborate on the concept.

In the studies mentioned above, the notion of a mobilities regime allows scholars to consider how international mobilities are managed, blocked, controlled and contained. This suggests that the concept of mobility regime – or in the tradition of mobilities research,

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5 Xiang’s and Nyiri’s use of the term in Chinese migration studies is discussed in Chapter 6.
a ‘mobilities regime’ – may prove to be a fruitful concept for studying the regulation of mobilities. The way the term is used in these existing studies, however, does not capture the diverse aspects of the politics of mobilities and the changing role of borders that mobilities and border studies have identified. Shamir and Turner, for example, stress that their mobility regime is working against movement, while critical scholars in mobilities and border studies have been quick to show that the politics of mobility are more diverse. Others seek to identify a global mobility regime, while there are many different types of mobilities and borders around the world. Instead of using one of the approaches mentioned above, I choose to develop the concept of mobilities regime through an empirical analysis of specific cases of regulation of international mobilities. The main research question this thesis seeks to answer is: How can we better understand the regulation of international mobilities by viewing it as a mobilities regime? Critical mobilities studies and border studies inspire me to ask more detailed research questions to analyse the cases and identify different aspects of mobilities regimes. I examine a range of questions in which mobilities studies’ sensitivity to the politics of mobilities is combined with border studies’ reconceptualization of the border: How are mobilities problematized and how are practices of regulating them legitimized? What technologies of classifying, examining, and controlling mobilities are used to regulate mobilities? What actors are involved in regulating mobilities and what are their stakes? And where and when is mobility regulated? An overarching question concerns the politics of mobility entailed by regulation, for example how the workings of a mobilities regime affect travellers’ movement. By examining these questions, I hope to improve our understanding of how international mobilities are regulated and the resulting politics of mobility. It is important to note that in identifying aspects of a mobilities regime, I start from the actual practices used. On a general level, the term mobilities regime in this thesis thus refers to practices of regulating international mobilities. Although my aim is to develop the concept of the mobilities regime as a bridge between mobilities studies and border studies, in the empirical chapters that follow I also draw on technology studies, geography, and political sociology. This dissertation thereby takes an interdisciplinary perspective on the regulation of mobilities, but by doing so I explicitly hope to contribute to critical approaches in mobilities studies.

In the following chapters, I empirically examine two cases of regulating mobilities. Through an analysis of these cases, I identify different aspects of mobilities regimes. My analysis is not on the level of the ‘global mobility regime’, neither does it deal with the familiar cases of anti-terrorism policies or efforts to curtail ‘undesirable’ migration to
Western countries. Instead, I focus on drug smuggling and on labour migration, and analyse the ways these international mobilities are regulated. Drug smuggling and labour migration have both largely been overlooked in the mobilities literature, in spite of their significance in terms of scale and economic value. With an estimated 80 million people working in a country other than their country of birth (IOM 2012), labour migration is undeniably an important form of contemporary mobility, and the global trade in illegal drugs is estimated at USD 320 billion in 2005, which makes it the largest sector in transnational criminality (UNODC 2005).

I trace the mobilities regimes for drug smuggling and labour migration by taking the airport as a method. Earlier I argued that international airports are sites where mobilities and borders meet, and where the regulation of international mobilities is an everyday problem. Drug smuggling and labour migration are considered to be difficult regulatory problems at the two airports where I did my research. The first case study is on efforts to curtail drug smuggling at Schiphol Airport in the Netherlands. This airport is a node in the route for the smuggling of drugs via air travel between South America and Europe. The regulatory problem therefore is to facilitate the international movement of bonafide people and goods, while restricting the movement of drug smugglers. The second case study is about a government program for protecting returning temporary migrant workers at Soekarno-Hatta Airport in Indonesia. Whereas drug smuggling is framed as a security problem, labour migration is framed as a problem of safety. The problem of extortion of returning migrant workers in and around the airport and on their way home has prompted the Indonesian government to introduce a special set of measures at and beyond Soekarno-Hatta Airport that is intended to protect migrant workers from malpractices during their journey home. The method of tracing mobilities regimes through airports, and the rationale for choosing the cases of drug smuggling and labour migration are discussed further in Chapter 2.

The structure of the empirical chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 requires some explanation. Each case study is discussed in two chapters: Chapters 3 and 4 analyse the curtailing of drug smuggling as a mobilities regime, and Chapters 5 and 6 do the same for labour migration. At the same time, Chapter 5 thematically mirrors Chapter 3, and Chapter 6 thematically mirrors Chapter 4 (see Figure 1). Chapters 3 and 5 start with a discussion of how mobilities are problematized and how the mobilities regimes are legitimized. As Jeremy Packer (2003, p. 136) by referring to Foucault argues, in order for an activity to be governed, it needs to be thought of in terms of a problem to be overcome. In this way, ‘problematization’ can be understood in a broad sense, because mobilities can become a ‘problem’ in different
ways. The fact that some valuable customers are unable to get through the airport checks in less than an hour can become a problem for the authorities at Schiphol Airport. Similarly, the notion that returning Indonesian migrant workers are unable to travel home safely by themselves is a way of problematizing the mobility of that group of people. Hence, I start from the premise that there is nothing inherently problematic about the mobilities I discuss, and that their being a problem is a social construction. The problematization of mobilities subsequently allows for the mobilities regime to be introduced as a response to a ‘problem’ (see also Budd et al. 2011). In addition, Chapters 3 and 5 discuss the technologies that regulate mobilities at the level of the traveller and his or her body. In doing so, these chapters investigate how at a particular site, upon arrival at the airport, passengers are categorized as labour migrants or drug smugglers, and how their mobility is subsequently regulated. Chapters 4 and 6 zoom out of the arrival terminal to examine what actors are involved in these mobilities regimes, and where and when mobilities are regulated.

Figure 1. Chapters 5 and 6 mirror Chapters 3 and 4, but discuss labour migration instead of drug smuggling.
III) Outline of the thesis

This chapter introduced the regulation of international mobilities as a research problem. I reviewed how mobilities studies and border studies approach this problem and proposed the concept of a mobilities regime as a bridge between critical approaches in the two fields. In what follows, I examine the fruitfulness of this concept by tracing two particular mobilities regimes empirically and analytically. In other words, the following chapters have the twofold aim of empirically examining two cases of the regulation of mobilities and further developing the mobilities regime conceptually.

Before it is possible to trace mobilities regimes, however, we first need to make mobilities regimes ‘researchable’. In Chapter 2, I propose the airport as a method for tracing mobilities regimes. The ‘mobilities turn’ not only entails a new theoretical approach, but also spurs the development of ‘mobile methods’ to study mobilities and immobilities. One of these mobile methods, as Büscher and Urry (2009) suggest, is to examine how people pass through transfer points such as airports. Inspired by this, I take the airport as a site from which to access and analyse mobilities regimes. I discuss the characteristics of airports that make them so suitable for this goal and at the same time I explain my methodological choices. In doing so, I outline four points of departure that will serve as a ‘sensitizing’ framework (see Blumer 1954) for my study of mobilities regimes. The chapter also includes some reflections on the practicalities and problems of doing fieldwork at and around airports.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine practices of curtailing the mobility of drug smugglers and the cocaine they bring. In Chapter 3, I first discuss how certain flights between the Caribbean and the Netherlands became framed as a security problem. Next, I discuss a number of technologies of classifying drug smugglers, and technologies of detecting drugs hidden on or in bodies. How do these technologies put people into categories and what effects do these regulatory practices have on travellers? In Chapter 4, I trace where and when mobilities are regulated, and who is involved. I discuss how, through collaboration of government actors with airlines, potential drug smugglers are increasingly screened and controlled far away from the Dutch territorial border, and before they start moving.

6 Blumer contrasted sensitizing concepts with definitive concepts. He explains that ‘[a] definitive concept refers precisely to what is common to a class of objects, by the aid of a clear definition in terms of attributes or fixed bench marks. [...] A sensitizing concept lacks such specification of attributes or bench marks and consequently it does not enable the user to move directly to the instance and its relevant content. Instead, it gives the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances. Whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts merely suggest directions along which to look’ (Blumer 1954, p. 7).
Chapters 5 and 6 examine the second case study, a government program for protecting returning Indonesian migrant workers. Like the mobility of potential drug smugglers, the mobility of labour migrants becomes problematic because of what they might be carrying with them. However, in this case it is not illegal drugs, but foreign currency. In Chapter 5, I discuss how migrant workers came to be seen as ‘vulnerable heroes’ who need to be protected by the government when they arrive at the airport. I analyse how the technologies in this new regime classify and examine migrants and control their movements, and what the effects are of this regulation. In Chapter 6, I identify the different stakeholders and their manifold legitimate and illegitimate interests in managing the migrants’ return journeys. I also discuss how the mobility of migrant workers is increasingly regulated and controlled far away from the border, until the migrants arrive in their home villages.

In Chapter 7 I attempt to map contemporary mobilities regimes by generalizing findings from the two cases. I discuss what features the two mobilities regimes examined in this thesis have in common, and also how the workings and politics of the two regimes differ. I also discuss in what ways the concept of mobilities regime can contribute to existing theories and debates about the regulation of movement in a mobile world, arguing that my approach can be used to examine and compare other mobilities regimes.