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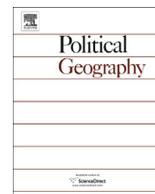
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Transit mobility governance in Turkey

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1. Introduction

How does Turkey govern what is called ‘transit mobility’¹ heading towards the European Union (EU)? The concept of transit mobility in relation to Turkey is used to describe irregular movements of persons who use Turkey as a transit country to enter the EU (Hess, 2012; İçduygu & Yüksek, 2012). Since the mid-1990s, the increasing importance of Turkey as a major country for irregular mobility towards Europe has become a key topic of concern for the EU (İçduygu, 2011). This has sparked scholarly interest in the examination of Turkey and transit mobility. Studies have examined the geographical origins, routes and types of mobile populations and the socio-economic dynamics of transit in Turkey (İçduygu & Toktaş, 2002; İçduygu & Kirişçi, 2009). Furthermore, numerous works have examined the interplay between Turkish management of human mobility and its accession negotiations with the EU (Paçacı-Elitok, 2013; Özçürümez & Şenses, 2011; İçduygu, 2007, 2011; İçduygu & Üstübcü, 2014). They have argued that the EU has sought to externalize its border and human mobility regime by exerting pressure on Turkey to reform its policies in accordance with those of the EU (Düvell, 2012; Paçacı-Elitok, 2013). İçduygu (2011, p. 2) notes that the good governance of transit mobility has become “a type of conditionality for the progress and completion of membership talks” and generated different degrees of reforms and legal developments in Turkey.

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¹ The concept of migration is problematic as it establishes false dichotomies between ‘economic migrants’, refugees and asylum-seekers in political discourse, policies and academic studies. In order to go beyond these dichotomies, I will henceforth replace the term ‘migration’ by terms such as ‘mobile populations’, ‘mobile individuals’, ‘mobility’ and ‘movement’.

While these studies have emphasized the historical-structural dimensions, political economy, the legal basis and foreign policy aspect of the topic, the actual governance of transit mobility in Turkey and its wider effects for the EU have yet to be analyzed. This article aims to fill this gap. To that end, it utilizes a “practice approach” (Côté-Boucher, Infantino, & Salter, 2014; Salter & Mutlu, 2013), which focusses on the actual activities and concrete situations through which transit mobility is governed in Turkey. The novelty of the conceptual framework adopted here lies in its examination of everyday strategies and tangible techniques employed by Turkish security officials to govern people moving towards the EU. A triangulated methodology is used to study Turkish practices by combining discourse analysis, interviews with Turkish security professionals and participant observation. The article is built on new empirical data gathered through fieldwork conducted from April to July 2016 in three Turkish cities: Ankara, Edirne and İzmir – with the latter two bordering the EU. While the increasing number of border crossings by Syrian displaced people from Turkish territories to the EU was clearly articulated in the answers by state officials, research findings also cover practices that target individuals beyond the Syrian refugees.

The practice turn in critical studies on security is shaped by a variety of approaches to the study of power, knowledge and governance. This article draws on the scholarship that concentrates on the governing of the population and its circulation (Amoore, 2006; Côté-Boucher et al., 2014; Foucault, 2009; Pallister-Wilkins, 2015b; Parsons & Salter, 2008) and links it to critical border studies on the multiple, diffused and mobile ways in which space and mobility are regulated and constructed (Amoore, Marmura, & Salter, 2008; Bialasiewicz et al., 2009; Coleman, 2007; Johnson et al., 2011; Pallister-Wilkins, 2015a; Rumford, 2006, 2012; Walters, 2004, 2006). While the article does not offer a broader sociological analysis of security practices in a Bourdieusian perspective, it benefits from Bourdieu-inspired methodological questions as regards the object of research as well as the scope and sites of data collection and data analysis (Salter & Mutlu, 2013). As such, the practice approach provides a more empirical and more grounded understanding of the logics, techniques, subjects of power and spatial configurations that operate in the daily governance of transit mobility in Turkey.

It is important to note that the concept of transit is highly disputed for being a problematic category in its meaning and usage.

The concept is said to be “unsettled and highly contested” (Düvell, Collyer & de Hess, 2012, p. 407) and “often negatively connoted and highly politicised” (Düvell, 2012, p. 416; İçduygu & Yükseker, 2012). On the one hand, scholars point to the problematic application of the concept of transit to a broad range of human beings, be they irregular migrants, visa over-stayers, refugees and asylum-seekers, thereby failing to shed light on their diverse biographies and experiences (Düvell, 2012; Hess, 2012). Based on fieldwork conducted in Turkey, Wissink, Düvell, and van Eerdewijk (2013, p. 1102) question the usefulness of “intentionality” as a category of conceptualizing transit mobility and find that not all people in an irregular status in Turkey have the initial objective of using the country as a transit. Instead, many decide on further movement towards Europe after a considerable amount of time and due to economic hardship, legal difficulties and social exclusion that they face in Turkey (Brewer & Yükseker, 2009). On the other hand, studies have highlighted how the EU's policy discourse around transit migration turns neighboring countries into risky geographies and “reinforces the EU efforts to externalise migration control and integrate non-EU countries into a comprehensive migration policy” (Düvell, 2012, p. 416), including Turkey in the context of its membership negotiations with the EU (İçduygu, 2011).

This article is aware of and by no means refutes the literature emphasizing the contested meaning of transit. Rather, it makes a different move and aims to advance the literature by taking the transit scholarship into unexplored directions. It does so by means of a practice approach that shifts the focus from the level of policy and discourse to an exploration of the actual practices by Turkish security professionals that intervene in the movement of persons from within Turkey towards Europe through interlinked forms of surveillance and control. Thus, the practice approach is not in contradiction with critical transit mobility research. The study addresses some of the key issues that have so far occupied the field of study. While previous research has challenged assumptions of peoples' intentions of transit or the size of transit mobility (Wissink et al., 2013), the practice approach looks at the moment of translation; that is, the moment of intervention by Turkish professionals into the transit movement.

The uniqueness of combining a practice approach and critical border studies lies in that it enables us to go beyond a concentric and territorial understanding of geography and space that has defined previous studies on transit mobility and its governance. As such, the article provides novel insights into the kind of bordering (Johnson et al., 2011; Rumford, 2006) that emerges out of Turkey's policing of human mobility. The conceptual framework of the study helps unpack the interplay between practices, space and mobility and speaks to different debates in critical security studies and border scholarship. To start with, previous research has mostly looked at Africa (Bialasiewicz et al., 2009; El Qadim, 2014; Frowd, 2014), North America (Andreas, 2000) and Australia (McNevin, 2014) to explore the production and reproduction of nation state/regional unit borders through the work undertaken by third countries. This article contributes to this strand of the literature by providing new empirical material relating to the Turkish governance of human mobility at EU borders. Moreover, the study throws into relief the productive effects of border practices in the constitution of new spaces of intervention and mobility (Debrix, 1998; Rumford, 2006). In so doing, it illustrates that transit as a concept is not entirely irrelevant but needs to be studied through an alternative approach that focuses on practices employed across a multiplicity of scales and spaces, thereby “pushing border enforcement inwards” (Coleman, 2007, p. 64). This moves transit mobility scholarship beyond its conventional understanding of territory and adds an exploration of emergent geographies and mobilities within the transit state space. The empirical findings also advance the

literature by calling attention to the notion of “scale” as a key site of bordering, which has received scarce attention in critical security studies despite its conceptual and empirical investigation in critical border studies (Laine, 2016; Paasi, 1998).

The article is structured as follows. First, I will outline the practice approach through an engagement with contemporary scholarship and put forward a research agenda to examine the governance of mobile populations as practice. This includes a discussion of critical border studies with a view to linking this strand of the literature to the practice approach. The merits of the conceptual framework are detailed by reference to the transit scholarship. Second, I will explain the methodology with a focus on the triangulation of data collection and analysis. Here, “the importance and uniqueness of fieldwork research” (Côté-Boucher et al., 2014, p. 197) will be emphasized. Third, I will analyze the empirical material in order to highlight the logics and techniques of Turkish transit mobility governance practices. I will identify checkpoints and the travel document as two central practices enacted by Turkish security professionals for the purpose of policing human mobility towards the EU. The empirical discussion of documents builds upon scholarly work on identification as an instrument of state power over human mobility (Caplan & Torpey, 2001; Gordillo, 2006; Parsons & Salter, 2008; Torpey, 2000) by not only offering its first systematic examination in transit mobility governance but also integrating the notion of scale into the analysis.

1.1. Transit mobility governance: practices and the spatial organization of mobility

This article builds on existing literature on “border security as practice” (Côté-Boucher et al., 2014), which has opened up original and innovative debates in critical security studies as regards to contemporary forms of border and mobility governance (Bigo, 2014; El Qadim, 2014; McNevin, 2014). This literature underscores the importance of studying “border security from the angle of everyday practices of the diverse actors who are appointed to carry it out” (Côté-Boucher et al., 2014, p. 196). The focus moves beyond the discursive and the policy level (Salter and Mutlu, 2013) towards a more empirical and localized account of border governance (El Qadim, 2014; Frowd, 2014; McNevin, 2014).

Practices are sites of ‘translation’ (Bigo, 2014) and “implementation” (Côté-Boucher et al., 2014, p. 198), whereby border governance acquires an essence and takes real shape through contextualized processes of meaning production, action and interaction. Thus, a practice approach is interested in “what actors appointed to secure borders actually do” (Côté-Boucher et al., 2014, p. 196, emphasis in original). It addresses the “ways in which border security is enacted” in and through practices and examines how actors attribute meaning to situations and their actions and devise and implement concrete logics and techniques to address these situations (Côté-Boucher et al., 2014, p. 198). When applied to transit mobility governance, a practice approach concentrates on the very sites and moments in which strategies are being developed and techniques are invented and deployed on an everyday basis in the policing of mobile populations.

The combination of critical security studies and border studies pushes the transit mobility literature into new directions. It does so by providing concepts and insights that enable the examination of both the various forms and diverse locations of border practices and the relationship between practices, space and mobility. Previous research is characterized by what John Agnew calls “the territorial trap” (Agnew, 1994, p. 71). Put differently, the general tendency has been to rely on “territorially embedded understandings of geography, governance” (Paasi, 1998, p. 69) as well as space and mobility. As a result, transit scholarship has adopted a

concentric view based on a transit-versus-destination country/regional unit binary. Such a view has shaped analyses of the embodiment and operation of transit – be it the geographic demarcation line between countries, the transit movement or its governance. Whether the focus is on the number of actual border crossings (Paçacı-Elitok, 2013), Turkish technical capacities of control and surveillance (Özçürümez & Şenses, 2011) or the countries of origin and routes (İçduygu & Toktaş, 2002; İçduygu & Kirişçi, 2009), transit (governance or movement) is thought to take place at the visible and material dividing line between states (Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria).

Intimately linked with concepts and categories relating to the nation state (Paasi, 1998; McNevin, 2014), the concentric view underlying transit mobility scholarship is inadequate to shed light on transit mobility as well as on the spatial configurations emerging in and through its governance. It is at this point that the bridging of critical security studies and critical border studies brings added value to transit migration scholarship. Critical border research is interested in location, which is neither fixed in time and space (Squire, 2011). It refuses to take “geography as a body of fixed categories” in the conceptualizations of territory and borders (Agnew, 1994, p. 56) emphasizing, instead, bordering (Bialasiewicz et al., 2009; Rumford, 2006, 2012). Accordingly, “borders are increasingly characterized by movement rather than stasis” (Johnson et al., 2011, p. 65). Conceiving borders as moving invites us to be attentive to the spatially disaggregated sites and places of border practices (Amoore, 2006; Rumford, 2012), such as “the city and the neighbourhood” (Amoore et al., 2008, p. 96), the “airport” (Salter, 2012) and the “island” (McNevin, 2014). The operation of borders in dispersed, mobile and also invisible forms goes hand in hand with “the shift in resources and enforcement practices to offshore and interior locales” (Johnson et al., 2011, p. 63).

This article stresses the constitutive function of daily practices in the creation of new spaces of transit in Turkey. Based on the imaginations of certain spaces as risky (De Goede, 2014) and certain forms of mobility as problematic, legal/illegal and wanted/unwanted (Amoore, 2006; Pallister-Wilkins, 2015b), border practices work to manage the population by capturing and acting upon movement at diverse places beyond the state border. What transit geographies emerge in Turkish territorial space through everyday practices of governing human mobility? The argument presented here is that Turkish transit mobility governance practices not only take place at locations away from the state border, but they are also productive of space through connection, demarcation, transformation, fragmentation and displacement. On the one hand, this article draws upon studies which have explored the intertwining of the internal and the external in the policing of borders and human mobility (Frowd, 2014; Pallister-Wilkins, 2017; Salter, 2012; Walters, 2006). This literature provides original insights as to how practices in the interior have far-reaching effects for the exterior in terms of carrying out border control duties for other countries and regional units, the latter such as the EU (Bialasiewicz et al., 2009). On the other hand, by taking dispersed and disaggregated forms, such practices open up new spaces of governance and intervention through deterritorialization and reterritorialization (Rumford, 2006). This becomes manifest, for instance, in the interventions of humanitarian organizations that take place at different places, including beyond the territorial boundaries of nation states (Debrix, 1998) thus “expand the spatial zone of operation” (Pallister-Wilkins, 2017, p. 93). Similar dynamics can also be seen in the detention practices on the Indonesian island of Binta, which exemplify not just the shifting of the Australian border outwards, but also the “disaggregation and dissolution of national territory”, thereby challenging conventional understandings about two geographically bounded units separated by a formal dividing line of

the state border (McNevin, 2014, p. 302).

The concentric assumption that has so far shaped the transit mobility literature comes into view in the conceptualization and empirical investigation of mobile subjects and their (dis-)connections with space. Even in critical research that deconstructs the concept of transit by challenging totalizing assumptions about individuals' motivations (Brewer & Yüksek, 2009; Wissink et al., 2013) or the potentiality of movement (Düvell et al., 2012), human mobility is labelled as transit by the very act of or the likelihood of crossing the visible and materially fixed line between two territorial units; namely, states. The practice approach moves the discussion beyond the “spatial registers” informed by territorially embedded notions of the state (McNevin, 2014, p. 306) and explores the centrality of practices to the spatial organization of mobility. “Discipline allows nothing to escape”, notes Foucault. “The apparatus of security, by contrast, (...) ‘lets things happen’” (Foucault, 2009, p. 45). A number of works have explored the diverse techniques of surveillance and administration through which the population and its circulation are spatially managed. These include, for instance, checkpoints (Parsons & Salter, 2008), passports (Torpey, 2000) and identity documents (Caplan & Torpey, 2001), which display the simultaneous operation of “empowerment and control” (Gordillo, 2006, p. 163) for the populations whose circulation they are meant to govern. Practices thus produce distinct bordering effects by inscribing a particular relationship between space and mobility. By allowing particular forms of circulation to happen while constraining others, practices not only affect the form and degree to which people “move through space and time” (McNevin, 2014, p. 302), but also connect and disconnect these individuals in relation to particular locations and places in the interior (Gordillo, 2006; McNevin, 2014).

In focusing on transit mobility governance in Turkey, this article examines a further dimension as regards to the relationship between border practices and space; that is, scale. Border studies calls our attention to the function of scales – be they local, national, regional and international – in the constitution of contemporary borders (Laine, 2016). As borders become multiple and disaggregated, they “operate on spatial scales larger and smaller than the state” (Paasi, 1998, p. 74) and turn the state, in this way, into “a multiscale construction” (Laine, 2016, p. 467). The notion of scale contributes to the exploration of practices by concentrating on their function in adding new layers to geography (of mobility), thereby collapsing the conventional territorial assumptions about the transit-versus-the destination country/regional unit. With places of intervention onto human mobility taking place away from the state border, the local as the site of border practices connects and detaches diverse scalar units in novel ways while simultaneously impacting on hierarchies of spatial accessibility for mobile people.

2. Methodology

This study uses a triangulated methodology: discourse analysis, interviews and participant observation. The findings are based on the fieldwork that I conducted in Turkey between April 2016 and July 2016. The fieldwork took place in three Turkish cities: Ankara, Edirne and İzmir. Being the capital of Turkey, Ankara is a significant site of data collection. In Ankara I was able to have face-to-face interactions with government officials through interviews. Both Edirne and İzmir belong to what is called the “Eastern Mediterranean Route”, which accounted for 885 386 detections of irregular people on the move arriving in the EU in 2015. Edirne constitutes the land border with the EU – both Greece and Bulgaria. İzmir, as the third biggest city in Turkey, is significant for being at the sea border with the EU. İzmir is located at the Aegean Sea in the immediate vicinity of Greek islands, the latter having witnessed the

largest number of arrivals in the EU during 2015 (FRONTEX, 2015).

During fieldwork, I conducted thirty structured and semi-structured interviews with Turkish officials. I selected individuals and institutions, who engage, through their daily exercises, in the governance of human mobility and border governance. In this regard, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) is the primary agency and fulfils its tasks through several institutions. In Ankara, I conducted interviews at the following agencies under the MoI: Department of Border Management— (Interviews 1 to 5) and Directorate-General of Migration Management (DGMM) (Interviews 6 to 9). In Edirne, I had interviews with the Police for the Edirne Province (Interviews 10 and 11); at Edirne Provincial Directorate of Migration Management (Interviews 12 and 13) and with the Turkish border police (Interviews 14 to 19) and customs officers (Interviews 20 to 24) located at Kapıkule border crossing point with Bulgaria and Pazarkule border crossing point with Greece. Interviews (25–30). Interviews in İzmir took place at the Police for the İzmir Province and at the Police Departments of the following districts: Aliğa, Çesme and Dikili that are key zones of departure for people on the move towards Greek islands. In order to maintain respondent confidentiality, I will not name my interviewees but only refer throughout the text to their occupation, institution and place of profession.

There are two central challenges in fieldwork research, which I sought to overcome in the following ways. To start with, in relying on interviews as a research method, I was aware of “the limits of analyzing practice through the way practitioners talk about their work” (Pallister-Wilkins, 2015b, p. 56). In her work on foreign policy institutions, Merje Kuus observes how interviews take place within “carefully calibrated codes of secrecy enforced through security clearances” (Kuus, 2013, p. 118). Having said that, discourse is also a form of practice in that it is through discursive articulations that social action is presented and meanings and legitimations for social practices are constructed (Shepherd, 2008). Furthermore, as Kuus further suggests, interviews “are rich social interactions in which, as in social interpersonal interaction, *necessarily* involves observation”, including the way things are said and the body gestures of the interview partners throughout the conversations (Kuus, 2013, p. 127, emphasis in original). Furthermore, my familiarity with Turkish cultural codes was an asset to facilitate my access to the field and gain trust, the latter also through multiple meetings with the same official. Again in following cultural codes, I paid particular attention to what Kuus terms “hanging out” (2013, 118) in order to build relationships beyond professional encounters. Once, I joined border and customs officials at Pazarkule border crossing point for their self-prepared dinner. Such instances of hanging out were crucial to be able to reach beyond professional conversations and provide a setting for my interviewees to “open up.”

Second, my fieldwork also involved participant observation, which offered direct observation of daily practices, including those that are “bodily” (Salter, 2012, p. 85). In both Edirne and İzmir, I was able to observe checkpoint practices by the police at the entry of and across the city. In Edirne, I had the opportunity to make observations at the Kapıkule and Pazarkule border crossing points, where I observed the control of the passports by the border police and the control of the vehicles by customs officers. While such observations required the consent and were under the control of the authorities concerned, there were also unexpected situations carrying analytical significance for my findings. In addition, I collected data through policy and document analysis, including regulations, reports and booklets by diverse government agencies as well as other official orders by government agencies to governorates and police departments.

In this research, I used an interpretive approach (Salter & Mutlu,

2013) to trace Turkish transit mobility governance practices. Being an inductive approach, the fieldwork was informed by a set of questions. This involves, firstly, a careful observation and study of border actors, their strategies, techniques, interventions and interactions among each other and with mobile populations. My interview questions were structured in ways that sought to understand how Turkish officials make sense of and portray their tasks, actions and interactions and justify their daily strategies and techniques (Côté-Boucher et al., 2014; Pallister-Wilkins, 2015b). The fieldwork also paid significant attention to the effects of Turkish practices of transit mobility governance. This entails two central questions as put forward by Côté-Boucher et al. (2014). First, I explored the sort of definitions and categorizations underpinning Turkish officials' meaning attribution to borders, security, transit and space, their use of techniques along with their actions and interactions in their daily practices. Second, I looked at how transit mobility governance practices are situated within, feed into and (re)produce or contest the EU's mobility and border practices.

3. Capturing human mobility and the spatial organization of transit

It is essential to situate my research within the current political developments as well as the legal and socio-economic conditions shaping the lives of refugees/asylum-seekers/mobile populations in Turkey. My fieldwork took place at a time when the civil war in Syria reached its fifth year - having fueled a massive displacement of Syrians with an estimated three million currently residing in the neighboring country of Turkey.² As the civil war in Syria started in 2011, Turkey announced an ‘open door policy’ for Syrians fleeing from war and set up a ‘temporary protection regime.’ It is important to note that Turkey applies a geographical limitation to the 1951 Geneva Convention meaning that the country grants refugee status only to individuals who come from Europe. Because Syrians are outside the scope of the Geneva Convention, they are not granted refugee status, and their stay, rights and conditions in the country are determined by the temporary protection regime. The temporary protection regime acquired a legal basis with the Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection, which was adopted in April 2013 and became effective in April 2014. Law No. 6458 is the product Turkey-EU accession negotiations and draws heavily on the EU's *acquis* in border and mobility governance issues. The specific provisions of the temporary protection regime were introduced with the ‘Temporary Protection Directive’ of 22 October 2014, including the right to legal stay, the principle to ‘non-refoulement’ (Art. 6), the right to health services (Article 27), the right to education services (Article 28) as well as principles governing the operation of and support in the camps (Articles 36 to 41) (Toğral Koca, 2016).

Despite the temporary protection regime, displaced Syrians in Turkey are under “precarious status and living conditions”, facing significant obstacles to citizenship rights and basic services such as education and health (Baban, Ilcan, & Rygiel, 2016, p. 2). 90% of displaced Syrians live outside the camps with limited opportunities of legal work despite Turkey's adoption of two important regulations in 2016 to set up a legal framework for the employment of persons under the temporary protection regime (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2016). Given their status under the temporary protection regime, Syrians are exempt from a separate individual ‘international protection’ application process, which the Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection grants to asylum seekers arriving in Turkey from other countries.

² <https://www.afad.gov.tr/en/2601/Introduction>.

Amnesty International estimates that apart from displaced Syrians, Turkey hosts 400,000 asylum seekers and refugees arriving particularly from Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran.³ These individuals are also outside the scope of Turkey's application of the 1951 Geneva Convention and face similar conditions of precariousness as Syrians (Şenses, 2016).

One needs to also consider the intensification of Turkey-EU exchanges and resulting legal and political developments in the last two years. In October 2015, Turkey and the EU adopted a 'Joint Action Plan' to address what the Plan calls the "massive influx of persons" through humanitarian assistance, legal, administrative and operational capacity-building along with cooperation in intelligence and information exchange (European Commission, 2015a). This was followed by the summit that took place on November 29, 2015, as Turkish and EU leaders emphasized the need for "stemming the influx of irregular migrants" who enter the EU from Turkish territories with the declared goal to "bring order into migratory flows" (European Commission, 2015b). The statement referred to the Turkey-EU Readmission Agreement (2013), which obliges Turkey to readmit all individuals entering the EU from Turkish territories provided that these individuals do not fulfil the conditions of entry, presence and protection under the legal framework of EU member states (Official Journal of the European Union, 2014). In March 2016, Turkey and the EU made a new statement, according to which Turkey has agreed to readmit all irregular people arriving at the Greek islands from Turkish territories from 20 March 2016 onwards (European Council, 2016).

There are two central practices which Turkey's everyday governance of transit mobility rest on: checkpoints and the travel document. It is through the deployment of checkpoints and the travel document that transit mobility governance materializes. What is common to the two practices of policing transit movement is that they are examples of bordering taking place beyond the formal demarcation lines that Turkey has with Bulgaria and Greece. In fact, they do bordering already inland - away from the sovereign dividing lines of Turkey with the EU and pull the border inwards. These practices rely on the problematisation of a particular type of mobility understood as risky - the onward journey towards Europe. Referring to human mobility in Turkey towards Europe, a customs officer in Edirne says that: "This is border violation" (Interview 20, May 2016). When it comes to Syrians, problematisation does not necessarily concern their presence in the country, rather, illegality is defined by reference to transit mobility or its potentiality (Interviews 22 and 24, May 2016). In explaining the rationale of checkpoints in Aliğa, a police officer stated: "As long as they (Syrians) stay in Turkey, there is no problem. We have opened our doors. They can stay at camps and even work outside the camps. But if they attempt to cross the border with Greece without a visa, this is illegal. Border crossing has to be legal with proper documentation" (Interview 30, July 2016). As discussed in detail in the following two sections, mobility across Turkey is perceived and also made legitimate through the travel permit.

3.1. Practices of checkpoints: spatiality and temporality of transit

In September 2015 thousands of people took buses and taxis and walked in masses towards Turkey's borders with the EU upon German Chancellor Angela Merkel's statement: *Wir schaffen das* – we can do it. Having mobilized through social media channels, they travelled from different places in Turkey, yet there were also new arrivals in Turkey for this particular journey (Interview 1, April

2016). It is estimated that there were around ten to fifteen thousand people who came to Edirne starting from 14 September for approximately 10 days (Interviews 10 and 11, May 2016). As the events developed, several checkpoints were set up in and around Edirne to act upon the prevailing dynamics of population movement. The deployment of these checkpoints at that time went hand in hand with the problematisation of human mobility towards Turkey's western borders. As a police officer in the Edirne Province stated:

"Last September, they got mobilized through social media with the belief that the EU would accept them. The main trigger event was Alan Kurdi's death. Their motto was: 'We don't want to drown, let us pass.' First, they travelled to İstanbul and then to Edirne in large crowds. Once they arrived, they were stopped at various checkpoints. These people told us that Angela Merkel had made a statement and invited them. We said to them that there was no such statement by the EU and they would not be let in by the Greeks and Bulgarians in an irregular way. We told them that the borders are closed. I gave them an example: 'Imagine that you are the host and want to let the guest in through the door. Would you instead let your guest enter your house through the chimney?' They replied that you would not. I told them that if the EU would accept them, it would be through regular channels.' In the following days, we tried to convince them to go back to their camps, where they are supposed to be" (Interview 11, May 2016).

Since then, the checkpoint has proven to be a key practice of Turkish policing of human mobility towards the EU. Checkpoints involve the checking of vehicles and serve three main purposes: controlling entry into the city, controlling movement within the city and controlling departure from the city (Interview 12, April 2016; Interview 25, June 2016). Checkpoints have a temporal nature. Parsons and Salter (2008, p. 709) suggest that checkpoints are "flying" as they "may appear, disappear and reappear" anytime. Several Turkish security officials both in Edirne and İzmir noted that practices targeting mobile people have intensified especially since the so-called refugee crisis in summer 2015. One senior police officer for the İzmir Police explained the appearance of new and additional checkpoints as follows: "Such mobility intensifies periodically and we react to these periodical developments. Let me put it this way: You meet someone and you start to get to know this person. Human mobility is the same. New dynamics emerge, such as sharp increases in numbers or new routes, and we show reaction through additional measures" (Interview 27, May 2016).

As such, the checkpoint exemplifies a site of bordering as it is at and through the checkpoint that transit mobility governance materializes. In other words, rather than being given and a pre-existing spatial reality, transit is enacted and constructed by the practices of those who engage in the policing of human mobility. What is important to note about the operation of checkpoints is the increasing involvement of security actors whose conventional responsibilities are outside the scope of border management. In fact, checkpoints are undertaken by the police, who are not traditionally border officials.

Likewise, checkpoints show the transforming of the functions of existing law enforcement devices for new purposes attached to border practices. Checkpoints are not new instruments utilized by Turkish law enforcement authorities (Interviews 28 and 29, June and July 2016). Nor were they initially conceived of and used for border policing. Instead, checkpoints have long served police surveillance activities in Turkey to fight against crime and criminals as explained by a police officer in Edirne: "Our main task is to provide security through law enforcement. Security is what we know best.

³ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/06/eus-reckless-refugee-returns-to-turkey-illegal/> (accessed 10 October 2016).

We have had checkpoints for many years to catch criminals, such as thieves, murderers, smugglers and of course terrorists” (Interview 10, May 2016). A similar definition of the original purpose of checkpoints was given by a police officer in Çesme: “Currently we have checkpoints that are active for 12 h. Our job is security, and we are after criminals, suitcase traders, thieves, wanted persons, etc. Migrants are only one group that our checkpoints target” (Interview 28, June 2016). This not only shows the appearance of mobile populations as a new subject of governance, but also throws into relief the redefinition of an existing law enforcement technique in line with and its incorporation into particular border logics. Originally associated with police surveillance activities to catch criminals, checkpoints are increasingly deployed to police human mobility towards Europe. This correlates with the problematisation of onward movement to Europe that draws upon the ordering of legality/illegality in terms of border crossings as discussed in the previous section (Interviews 14 and 18, May 2016).

My individual encounters with Turkish law enforcement practices on two separate occasions throughout 2016 are illustrative of the double function of checkpoints. On the first occasion in May 2016, I was travelling by bus to Edirne for fieldwork as part of this research project. As the bus was approaching the Edirne Bus Terminal, it was stopped by Turkish law enforcement authorities. As soon as the two officials entered the bus, they took a quick look at the passengers and started ID checks, during which they reached two groups of four (each with two adults and two children). During conversations with both groups (which consisted of an exchange of a few words in Turkish), the officials demanded passports and other relevant documentation, which the individuals apparently did not possess. The two groups were asked to leave the vehicle for further administrative checks, whereas the remaining passengers, including myself, were allowed to continue the journey. On the second occasion, I was travelling again by bus to the city of Muğla on Turkey's western coast. The trip was a few days after the failed military coup in Turkey in July 2016. The bus was stopped by police in the city for ID checks, during which the police officers told us that they were after the fugitive soldiers who participated in the coup attempt. These two occasions not only have direct analytical relevance to my argument about the translation of existing law enforcement practices into techniques of human mobility, but they were also significant in that I was rendered a subject of those governance practices that I was studying to understand Turkish governance of transit mobility.

Checkpoints indicate the centrality of scale in the construction of borders. As observed elsewhere (Paasi, 1998), borders are practiced in Turkey at spatial levels not limited to the national one; that is, the state border, and this is manifest in checkpoint practices operating at the local level in dispersed sites. This does not mean that Turkish state borders are obsolete and no longer relevant for the sovereign control of mobility and space. Rather, what checkpoints attest to is the increasing significance of the local as a key spatial scale for the materialization of border practices in transit mobility governance in Turkey. As localized practices, checkpoints transform the border by shifting practices of the policing of mobile populations inwards and away from the state border.

The dislocation of border practices into the interior is not the only way through which checkpoints at the local level relate to transit geography and beyond. In this regard, three aspects about checkpoints require closer attention to reflect on their function in the production of space. These three points disclose the inability of prevailing assumptions in transit scholarship about geography, governance and mobilities. First, checkpoints produce their own spatial notions of transit and the scale of its governance that go beyond a territorially exclusive understanding of the nation state. It is not only the likelihood or the very act of crossing the physical

border of the state that practices of transit mobility governance are envisaged to address. Instead, checkpoints diffuse distinct notions of space, which entail a hierarchical arrangement of the transit state space along a spectrum of risky and non-risky. They do so by imagining and acting upon geography along de-territorialized categories and classifications of risk. This is associated with the understanding of risk as the entry into and movement within particular spatial zones within the territory of the nation state.

These geographical imaginations of risk cannot be understood by the transit-versus-destination space binary as becomes evident in the two risk categories featuring in Turkish daily practices of checkpoints: geographical characteristics and proximity. Both categories call for de-bordering by means of dispersed and multilayered forms of intervention. As one border police officer in Edirne put it: “In addition to bordering both Bulgaria and Greece, Edirne is highly risky also because of its quite favorable geographical features. Edirne has a flat landscape, which enables an easy travel for irregular migrants through the land route. This is the reason why migrants choose to come to Edirne because it is an easy journey - to and from the city. If you take a taxi from Edirne city center, it takes you to the border in less than half an hour and then you cross the land border on foot” (Interview 19, May 2016). The “suitable” geographical features of Edirne encompass the Maritsa River (Meriç or Evros), which constitutes most of Turkish-Greek border. Maritsa allows for “an easy crossing of the Turkish-Greek border especially during summer months when the water reaches its lowest flow rates” (Interview 23, May 2016).

Second, the interplay between practices and space is constitutive of new spaces of intervention in and through the operation of checkpoints. As inland mobility (especially of Syrians) proves secondary to the problematisation of human movement towards Europe (Interviews 4, 6 and 8, April 2016), the local proves to be the central site for transit mobility practices. For instance, there are four main checkpoints scattered around the city of İzmir to control entry at following spots: 1) Kemalpaşa District, 2) Menemen District and the city's boundary points with 3) Manisa and 4) Balıkesir, respectively. In order to control departure, the Police for the İzmir Province has checkpoints at Narlıdere highway entrance to control movement to the Çesme district, which is in the vicinity of the Greek island Chios as well as in the Menemen district to regulate mobility towards Dikili and Foça that are in close proximity with the Greek island of Lesbos (Interview 27, July 2016). The Police Departments of Aliğa, Çesme and Dikili districts have additional checkpoints (Interviews 28, 29 and 30 June and July 2016). The proximity and geographical characteristics of Edirne serve as key considerations for practices of checkpoints located at diverse spatial sites in the city, including the Maritsa River and the Maritsa Bridge along with a variety of “strategic points”, such as the Edirne-Istanbul TEM Highway, the Edirne Bus Terminal village roads and the land route to border crossing points with Bulgaria and Greece. A similar logic is at the heart of the multiplication of checkpoints around Aliğa, where three to four checkpoints were undertaken particularly during summer months to capture movement towards the coastal towns of Dikili and Foça, both of which are considered risky because of their closeness to Lesbos and their geographical features, most importantly the indented coastline (Interview 30, July 2016).

With the local serving as the key scale of policing human mobility, checkpoints have transformative effects for transit geography in ways that cannot be captured by spatial categories based on territorial assumptions as regards to the nation state and its territory. On the one hand, checkpoints change the topography of the border as practices pave the way for de-territorialization. Checkpoints do not act upon the physical act of the crossing of the border. Instead, and following de-territorialized spatial notions

of risk, practices of policing human mobility change the location of bordering by displacing the zone of intervention to the sub-state scale. This generates the reorganization of physical space through strategies and techniques that try to contain mobility before the concrete act of border crossing takes place. On the other hand, checkpoints fragment the state space by creating new transit spaces with the country of transit. With the dispersing of the places of intervention to, for instance, the highway, the village road and city boundary points (Interview 8, April 2016; Interviews 15 and 21, May 2016), checkpoints divide the Turkish physical space into zones – differentiating among and within cities, districts and even neighborhoods. This results in the emergence of new transitory geographies that challenge assumptions about a homogenous national territory in the governance of human mobility. The local as the scale of intervention performs an additional bordering function that inserts a distinct layer to spatial accessibility for mobile populations within the state territory.

Third, and relatedly, in addition to regulating the state territory, the local rearranges spatial linkages/demarcations beyond the national territory. With notions of and daily interventions into transit mobility acquiring de-territorialized and dispersed forms, checkpoint practices reorganize the relationship between the national (Turkey) scale and the national (Bulgaria and Greece)/regional (the EU) scale. Thus, it is too simplistic to reduce bordering to the state border and consider the latter as the only line of demarcation between the EU space and the non-EU space. Rather, the local as the site of practices performs a distinct bordering function with effects as to the (dis-)connectivity of the Turkish state space in relation to the EU. Not everywhere within the Turkish geography is equally close to or distant from the other side of the state border for mobile populations. Instead, by managing mobility in the interior, local practices generate new forms of division within the transit space in line with which the national territory before the site of the checkpoint is moved away from the EU territory further than those geographies beyond the checkpoints – be they the entire bordering city, the neighborhood or the other side of the river. This runs counter to the concentric view resting on a transit-versus-destination division and brings to the fore instead the workings of graded geographies of linkage/segregation of the national space as to the EU space.

The second practice used in Turkish human mobility governance is the travel document. Like checkpoints, travel documents work to spatially organise mobility with effects on the transit geography. The following section turns to the practice of the travel document with a main focus on its enabling and controlling functions.

3.2. *The travel document: the spatial organization of mobility*

Article 77 of the Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection states that asylum-seekers under Turkey's international protection regime may, in case of need, obtain permission to leave their city of residence up to thirty days. In this case, a travel (permit) document (*yol izin belgesi*) is required to be able to travel from one city to the other. The travel document is delivered in hard copy, contains the personal information and photo of the bearer along with the destination, duration and reason of travel. The Law obliges return to the city of residence by the expiry date of the travel permission, which might be renewed for another thirty dates upon the bearer's application if the need arises (Interview 9, April 2016).

The travel document is increasingly used in the daily practices of Turkey's governing of human mobility towards the EU. Firstly, and similar to the checkpoints, the travel document is practiced at the local level by those individuals who are not border officers in the traditional sense. The travel document is issued by either the DGMM or the governorate of the city of the applicant's legal

residence. Borders are practiced at the very moment whereby the state official makes a decision on the eligibility as well as the credibility of the mobility request of the applicant. Transit mobility is interfered preemptively through the spatial planning of circulation within the state space, which pulls the border further inwards to a mundane DGMM or governorate building in a city that is kilometers away from the state border with the EU. This sub-state scale of border practices remains obscured in the existing language informing the transit migration scholarship that takes the state border as the only meaningful object of the analysis of human mobility and its governance.

The bordering function of the travel document relates to its rearrangement of the relationship between space and mobility within transit geography. In line with the problematisation of onward movement towards the EU, the travel document seeks to have a grip on where the individual is positioned within the state territory, and this makes the travel document different from the checkpoints. The travel document is one of the various other types of documentation used in different parts of the world in the spatial regulation of mobility (Caplan & Torpey, 2001; Torpey, 2000). Gordillo points to “the tension between empowerment and control” (2006, p. 163) underpinning the issuing of documents in modern states. Documentation, as a technology of biopolitics, has the double logic of broadening mobility opportunities for populations and controlling the modes, conditions and the spatial extent of such mobility (Torpey, 2000). The travel document in the Turkish governance of mobile populations also displays the simultaneous operation of empowering and controlling functions of documentation. On the one hand, the travel document enlarges the zone of circulation for non-citizens around the country. The main rationale is not to halt or incarcerate mobility in the transit state space in its entirety (Interview 5, April 2016). Instead, the travel document illustrates the intertwinement of mobility, security and population as conceptualized by Foucault (Foucault, 2009). The travel document performs an enabling function in that it provides mobile individuals a larger space of movement within the Turkish state territory. A police officer in Çesme refers to the volume of flows into the district during summer months due to its popularity as a tourist attraction and notes that “people have the right to move freely across the country, including Syrians. Syrians may also come to Çesme; this is not a criminal activity” (Interview 28, June 2016).

On the other hand, the travel document is indicative of the control function of biopolitics, whereby population circulation is not unconditional or unlimited, but needs to be regulated. The travel document is a technology of power. Looking at the history of documentation, Torpey points out how “documentary controls on movement and identification have been essential to states' monopolization of the legitimate means of movement” (2000, p. 3). Legitimacy in human mobility refers to the authorization and management of circulation by state institutions who are interested in knowing, monitoring and containing the movement of the population (Gordillo, 2006; Torpey, 2000). In the case of Turkey, the control element of documentation corresponds to a similar rationality of government, whereby the travel document strives for “population control through the control of peoples' mobility” as a DGMM official explains (Interview 5, May 2016). In other words, the travel document is a technique of bureaucratic power exerted by Turkish authorities to control the population within state territories through the management of movement. “The travel document is important to secure that mobility takes place within our knowledge and in an organized manner”, added a DGMM official (Interview 5, May 2016).

Another way in which the travel document performs a bordering function is through the introduction of hierarchies of

travel for people moving in the transit space. The very rationality of the travel document is to differentiate the citizen from the non-citizen in terms of conditions of mobility. By obliging the non-citizen to obtain an official permit to travel from one city to the other, the travel document not only confirms the Turkish state's monopoly over legitimate and illegitimate journey, but it also introduces hierarchies of travel within the state territory. It inserts invisible borders among the population by authorizing who can travel freely within the country and who cannot. The individual is differentiated through documentation as mobility is spatially configured around categories of citizen/non-risky traveler versus non-citizen/risky traveler. The travel document is a practice, where the ordering of risky and non-risky travel becomes visible. At checkpoints, the Turkish citizen (unless identified as a criminal) is free to enter into and move freely in İzmir and Edirne, whereas the non-citizen has to provide evidence that their journey is authorized through the travel document.

Furthermore, hierarchies of travel also apply to different individuals belonging to the mobile population in Turkey. Moving beyond territorial registers of the nation state, McNevin (2014, p. 296) underlines the necessity to take into account context-dependent “governing strategies” to understand shifting categories and statuses applying to people as circulate within a certain space. In addition to the citizen/non-citizen divide, the travel document as a governing strategy embodies varying practices of ordering movement for mobile populations in Turkey. As such, the travel document subverts the citizen-versus-non-citizen divide adopted in existing studies of transit mobility. It displays the multiplicity as well as dynamism of categories attached to mobile individuals in accordance with the context-specific governance practices in Turkey.

In this respect, there is a need to differentiate the period up until the so-called refugee crisis in the summer of 2015 and afterwards. This was mainly due to the diverse procedures of residence and mobility that used to apply to Syrians on the one hand, and to non-Syrian non-citizens, on the other hand. Syrians are under Turkey's temporary protection regime specifically designed for displaced people as regards the Syrian civil war. This regime is based on the principle of non-refoulement and grants Syrians the right to legal stay provided that they register with Turkish authorities in one of Turkey's eighty-one provinces. Upon registration with Turkish authorities, Syrians acquire a “temporary protection identity card”, which has the photograph and basic identity information of the bearer. This document contains a “foreigner's ID number” that is required to benefit from basic health care and education services. Since only 10% live in the state-run camps, displaced Syrians are, at least in principle, allowed to live in any city across the country. The right to legal stay does not equate to a residence permit as the temporary protection regime needs to be renewed by the Turkish Board of Ministers. Non-Syrian asylum-seekers, on the other hand, are under Turkey's international protection regime and make individual applications for status determination and resettlement in a third country. They live in one of the sixty-five satellite cities and possess an identity document. Asylum-seekers have the obligation to regularly notify authorities in their satellite cities and are allowed leave their city of residence only occasionally and with a travel permit document issued by the governor of their satellite city. Edirne and İzmir are not satellite cities, and asylum-seekers are allowed to reside in non-satellite cities only in exceptional circumstances (Interview 8, April 2016).

These differing procedures of residence have had important bordering effects for non-citizen populations in Turkey. Syrians with passports and the above described identity documents issued by Turkish authorities were relatively free to travel around the country, including visits in İzmir and Edirne, whereas non-Syrians

were subject to and are still subject to strict procedures that serve a bordering function through documentation. As a police officer at İzmir Police explained: “For instance, there are Pakistanis stopped at the checkpoints lacking a European visa or a travel permit issued by Turkish authorities. They are asylum-seekers in Turkey waiting for their applications to be processed. İzmir is not a satellite city. Because Pakistani asylum-seekers are not allowed to stay in İzmir, we do not let them into the city” (Interview 25, June 2016).

The mass mobility of people from within Turkey towards Europe during the summer of 2015 consolidated the travel document as a practice of bordering and incorporated an increasing number of individuals; that is, Syrians, into its governance framework. At the height of the 2015 mass movements, Turkey's DGMM issued an official order⁴ to prevent unauthorized travel of Syrians by means of more inland controls to manage their mobility. The letter authorized law enforcement authorities to increase the number of checkpoints so as not to allow this particular segment of the population to travel without a valid travel document. The practice is reaffirmed with the adoption of the Regulation on the Application of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection⁵ and a circular⁶ in early 2016. Section 4 of the circular entitled “Population Mobility and Change of City Residency”, obliges all Syrians under Turkey's temporary protection regime to obtain a travel permit document in order to travel from their city of residence to another city in the country. Here again, risk is understood as mobility aiming towards the EU borders. “The increased controls back then were aimed at irregular migration because migrants' presence in İzmir was a big risk. We had to take measures to act pre-emptively through the control of buses and vehicles. We let individuals with a travel document in. Those without a travel document were stopped and sent back” (Interview 26, June 2016). A focus on the two periods reveals the non-static and varied nature of the travel document as a bordering practice. It also warns against existing subject categories shaped by a territorial understanding of the state and invites for a study of governing practices that constitute a dynamic and complex relationship between space, population and mobility with effects of producing and reproducing hierarchies of travel and access.

4. Conclusion

This article started with an empirical puzzle: How does Turkey govern transit mobility towards the EU? To address this question, this article made the first attempt to develop a conceptual framework that emphasizes the practices of governing transit mobility in Turkey. The article combined two strands of the literature - critical security studies and critical border studies - and proposed a practice approach to transit mobility governance that shifts the analysis from policies and discourse to everyday strategies and techniques utilized by Turkish officials.

The central focus of the article is on two practices - checkpoints and the travel document - both of which carry out bordering functions across multiple and dispersed sites and scales in the governance of transit mobility. Thus, the findings of the article lead the transit migration scholarship to previously unexplored directions by highlighting the interplay between practices, space and

⁴ DGMM, the Ministry of Interior, Official Order No. 55327416-000-22771, Dated 29.08.2015.

⁵ The Regulation on the Application of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, 17 March 2016.

⁶ Circular on the procedures and principles concerning individuals under the temporary protection regime, available at: http://kizilcahamam.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2016_03/22094122_gkkusulveesaslargenelge.pdf.

mobility and zooming into the local as a key place of governance. They demonstrate the productive effects of practices in the rearrangement of territory in the transit state as well as in the emergence of new spaces of connection and disconnection as to both mobile subjects and multiple geographical scales in and beyond Turkey. The article thus challenges concentric and territorial assumptions that have so far defined the literature on transit migration while contributing at the same time to both critical security studies and border studies.

A central finding of this article is that Turkish practices reproduce the EU border. The workings of checkpoints and the travel document illustrate that Turkey's borders diffuse into regions, cities and even districts, roads and the river in line with the problematisation of onward mobility to Europe, thereby pulling the EU border into the Turkish state. Practices also shape subjects of power as Turkish law enforcement authorities, who are originally authorized to catch criminals, increasingly frame and devise their strategies to manage human mobility towards Europe. As the findings regarding the daily use of checkpoints and the travel document clearly demonstrate, practices utilize existing governance instruments for new purposes and shape Turkish law enforcement activities, which increasingly incorporate definitions, subjects, strategies and tactics with regard to population movement heading for Europe.

One point needs elaboration. The findings of this article should in no way be read as suggesting that Turkish practices are effective in stopping people on the move. In fact, evidence shows that it is impossible to stop human mobility regardless of geography and the state. Nor do the findings intend to argue that Turkish practices merely reflect EU preferences and expectations. Instead, this article draws attention to the effects of Turkish daily practices of governing human mobility. By looking at strategies and techniques employed by Turkish officials, it underscores how daily actions and interactions happening in Turkey dovetail with the EU's border and mobility regime and consolidate the EU border already in the interior space of the transit state.

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