

Title: Borders and Mobility

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Date: 5 April 2021, Time: 18.00 hrs (IST)

Abstract: It is difficult to define the concept of the border with rigour and precision; it is easier to make sense of it as an institution and a practice with the help of associated concepts, such as boundary, frontier, borderlands, etc. The border as a mode to protect and delimit a territory is old. What makes the present history of the border particularly stand out as conflictive is the unprecedented human mobility of our time. The border is an apparatus of security. At the same time its goal in a democracy is to guarantee freedom. The paradox is: how will the government combine considerations of security and of communication and circulation of labour, commodity, money and information? The new science of governance aims at utmost freedom of circulation, and therefore seeks to free the country of internal borders and boundaries. Yet these mean the emergence of risks, and thus of a risk society – the other name of free society. Neo-liberal governance tries to combine risk and freedom - an eternally fragile combination that goes by the name, border. In the classical mercantilist age borders balanced the economic games while the constitution of people went on as a parallel process. Now the border as an institution is clueless in face of the conflictive forces of trade, identities, logistical compulsions, and flows of labour and capital. Borders are thus crucial for global capitalist development – possibly more so today, when capital needs ever more mobility. At the same time the reserve army of labour building up on a global scale must be retained in harness in a national form. What then in this situation will be the principle of calculation for the cost of economic freedom? More fundamentally, what then will happen to the mobile bodies?