

EastBordNet

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**anticipating *hey you there!*
interpellation on the road to the border**

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This working paper ethnographically explores the contrast between two episodes in which people approach inter-state borders by car. Emphasising the importance of the location of those people—certified by particular state-issued documents—in relation to the regime of sovereignty and mobility regulation at work, it stresses the importance of *anticipation* in those episodes. To further analyse this temporal dimension, it explores the value of two concepts developed to theorise subject formation in modern social configurations—interpellation and confession. The working paper hopes to show that, although they originate from philosophical treatises on subject formation detached from empirical research, these concepts can be useful tools for ethnographic analyses of border-crossing episodes if deployed in a limited, precise and pragmatic-material manner that avoids the assumptions of circularity and affective investment that their use often entails.

first episode

My 1970s and 1980s childhood involved regular border crossings between Belgium and the Netherlands. I grew up in Belgium, but almost all my relatives lived in the South of The Netherlands, between 45 and 65 km away from the village where we lived. Paradoxically, visiting those who *did* live in Belgium, my maternal grandparents and my mother's brother and his family, who now ran the farm on which my mother had grown up, actually required two border crossings. This is because they lived in an enclave. Due to some bizarre historical twists in the formation of territorial sovereignty, their houses, and a few small pieces of land around them, were located in Belgium, but surrounded on all sides by territory belonging to The Netherlands. As a result, all our family visits involved crossing the border at least once.

In a precursor to the Schengen zone, border controls between the Benelux states had already been minimised in those days and several of the routes we frequently took involved non-policed crossings. While this area was once well-known for smuggling (of butter, *jenever* and tobacco, for example), economic asymmetries decreased rapidly and the border became ever less guarded. Over the years, the material embodiments of border policing on the main roads slowly faded: barriers and flags were removed, abandoned customs offices were dismantled or fell into disrepair and looked ever less like border posts. On the minor rural road that we took most frequently, there was never any kind of border post during my lifetime.

Picture the scene of one of those trips, as, on a night in the late 1970s, the Jansen household returns from a family visit in their bright red Datsun 100a. My brother and I sit in the back, tired from playing at the farm and testing the patience of our parents in the front of the car. We leave my mother's parental house and turn from the farmyard onto the road—and thereby from territory under sovereignty of Belgium onto territory under sovereignty of The Netherlands. We drive south on a minor road through misty low-lying fields and some woodland, and approach the Belgian border. This requires no special attention, even by the driver, for there is no marked border crossing here. In principle there is a possibility that we will have to show our IDs for inspection to a mysterious entity that our parents sometimes refer to as a 'flying patrol'. Perhaps they only mentioned this roving unit once, but I remember being fascinated by it. As I write this, I remember another detail that similarly intrigued me. There is a farm that adults (perhaps our parents as we drove by) once said had been raided for illegal *jenever* distillation. I remember what it looked like, I remember it was very near to the actual border line, but I don't remember on which side.

Despite my vague sense of excitement about this border (i.e. the point where the tidemark left by some long-gone sovereignty games actually crosscuts the road we drive on), no particular practices are associated with it: we do not anticipate *doing* anything at that particular spot. We do not expect to stop or even to slow down, we do not prepare any documents for

inspection. There are no marked cues that tell us where the border is. Yet like all members of my household, I have implicitly learned to recognise visual prompts: for example, house styles differ somewhat and there are more white and black cows along the road in The Netherlands and more white and brown ones along the stretch in Belgium—but these shifts appear gradually rather than at a certain spot. Traffic signs and road marking are systematically different right from the border onwards, but they are absent from this particular rural route. Yet, as we shall see later, we know precisely at which precise point we cross the border.

second episode

Many years later, in the summer of 2000, shortly after I had started ethnographic research in Tuzla (Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH)), I travelled to a workshop in Dubrovnik (Croatia). I arranged to give a lift to two colleagues who were also attending: A., a citizen of the then Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (*Savezna Republika Jugoslavija*, SRJ) resident in Beograd, the capital of Serbia, and B., a US citizen who was carrying out research in Mostar (BiH) at the time. A. took a bus from Beograd and crossed the Drina, which had recently become the state border between Serbia (SRJ) and BiH, into Bijeljina, in the Serbian-dominated entity of BiH, known as *Republika Srpska*. There she changed to another bus, one of the few at the time that crossed the Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL), which took her to Tuzla. I picked A. up from the Tuzla bus station, and we drove together to Sarajevo, where we stopped to have *pita* in the old town, and then continued to Mostar, where we picked up B.

The common, and the fastest, route from Mostar to Dubrovnik is to drive south into Croatia until one reaches the Adriatic Sea, and then east, following the *Magistrala*, the main road following the coastline to Dubrovnik. This route, however, was not a possibility for us due to the documentary requirements that were in force at the time. In her SRJ passport, A. needed a visa to enter Croatia, which she had duly applied for with the invitation letter I had sent her. A. had gone through this procedure at the Croatian consular office on many occasions in order to travel with her children and her husband, all three of whom (also) had Croatian documents, to the latter's village of origin on an island off the Croatian coast. Like many others in her situation, she found the time-consuming procedure infuriating and humiliating, but she did it anyway, knowing it was the only way to secure legal entry. The problem was that the visa A. had in her SRJ passport was a one-entry visa, and the common route from Mostar to Dubrovnik requires two entries. After a first entry into Croatia, one leaves it in order to cross the municipality of Neum, a small section of the Adriatic coast which belongs to BiH, and then one enters Croatia for a second time. For this reason, we had planned out another route, taking much longer. This alternative route involves turning east from the main road that links Mostar with the coast and following the little used, narrow mountain road that eventually meanders southwards into Neum. Thus reaching the *Magistrala* on its short stretch in BiH, one takes an eastward turn, crossing the border into Croatia, and continuing to Dubrovnik.

Let's take a closer look at the last stretch of our travel in BiH. Driving south from Mostar, we take a turn east. Picture the harsh, stony landscape of south Herzegovina in late summer. Yellow-brown rocks and dried-up scrub are being scorched by the August sun. This region was never densely populated, and since the 1992-5 war, even fewer people live here. Taking advantage of their majority status and of the proximity of Croatia, recently proclaimed an independent state, Croatian (para)military forces had established control and almost all Bosniaks and Serbs had been expelled or had escaped. Many of their houses had been looted and destroyed, as had buildings that could not be straightforwardly be inscribed in Croatian national-religious heritage. Many Croatian inhabitants had left too, moving abroad or joining the population movement to cities reinforced by the war. When we traverse it in 2000, recent visible human interventions in the landscape reflect the hard-core Croatian nationalism associated with the area: newly erected crosses, flags of neighbouring Croatia and graffiti messages proclaiming loyalty to Croats indicted for war crimes, to Croatian WWII fascism ('U' for Ustaša) or establishing territorial claims (*I ovo je Hrvatska* ['This is Croatia too']). The latter testify to one of the war objectives of the Croatian units that operated here, whether it was shared by all their participants or not: to include this region into the newly proclaimed state of Croatia. In other words, to them, the border we are driving towards should not have been

located there at all. In their view, the barriers, the flags, the offices and the uniformed border officers—the material apparatus of the border crossing ritual we are preparing for in the car—should have been established elsewhere.

A ramshackle grey Peugeot 309 with Belgian number plates slowly snakes its way through this landscape. None of us in the car has ever been here. There is hardly anyone else about, except for a few people sitting outside a small container, functioning as a bar, adorned with a Croatian flag and a sign saying *Zavičaj* ['homeland', 'Heimat']. We stop for a drink. We grow silent when we pass through particularly severe scenes of devastation, we comment on the heat and the landscape, we point out graffiti messages. One particularly persistent theme of conversation is conditioned by the trajectory our particular trio of people is taking. The only reason for us to be on this unusual route to Dubrovnik at all is the one-entry visa for Croatia in A.'s SRJ passport. We lament the documentary requirements imposed on her trip by the post-Yugoslav order of mobility regulation, and the inequality between us that arises from it. In other words, the shape and the affective colour of our practices—driving on this particular road, pointing out those particular dimensions of what falls within our field of vision, talking or not talking about these particular things, feeling those particular moods—emerge with regard to the politics of sovereignty.

...and so does the mundaneness before the border crossings I remember making as a child. Of course many differences exist: different cars, different times, different borders. The BiH-Croatia border post did not even exist before the 1990s. Different people too: I am the only person present at both occasions (and much changed at that: two decades years older, more travelled, and perhaps a meter taller in the second case). What I think allows me to bind those two episodes together here, and to tease out one particular difference, is that both involve a particular relationship between the documents we are carrying—passports or IDs that certify us as persons worthy or unworthy of certain cross-border movement—and the event of the border crossing. That event is located topographically in a particular place—in the story of my childhood, this is the unpoliced point where the borderline between The Netherlands and Belgium crosscuts the road, and in the 2000 story, it is the border post between Neum (BiH) and the strip of Croatia to its east. It is also located in a particular time: the very near future. We are moving towards that point in time and space, we know our crossing is imminent.

interpellation and border checks

I suggest that one difference between the two episodes can be understood by tracing them in terms of interpellation. Although he was not the first to use the concept of interpellation, its current use in social theory is associated with the work of the Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser. Instead of starting, in humanistic fashion, from the existence of subjects, Althusser suggested we treat them as effects of a particular process of subject-formation: 'interpellation'. Subjects, for him, are interpellated by ideologies. These ideologies are at work everywhere, even in seemingly 'neutral' practices such as greetings, which can be seen as 'rituals of ideological recognition' providing us with security that 'we are indeed concrete, individual, distinguishable and (naturally) irreplaceable subjects' (Althusser 1971: 173). The process of becoming subjects of the state occurs through what Althusser calls ideological state apparatuses (ISAs), the 'material existence of ideology', such as systems of identification of citizens, of taxation, of education, but also the family etc. These ISAs provide a set of subject positions, and through a set of regulated practices, they are the conduits of interpellation and thus produce subjects. Althusser's most famous example is that of a policeman who addresses a passer-by on the street, shouting 'hey you there'. By responding to this hailing, Althusser argues, we take up a subject position of subjugation by the state, whose representative the policeman is. 'The hailed individual will turn round. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a subject' (Ibid.: 174).

Althusser's theory of interpellation has been criticised in many ways, for example for being too language-centred and for being too focused on a centralised model of sovereignty, and his particular postulation of ideology and ISAs have been found even more wanting. His

understanding of 'ideology' foregrounds 'the state', but the example of the hailing policeman remains a mere illustration of how subjects emerge *tout court*. As Judith Butler has argued, this scene should be seen as 'exemplary and allegorical [and] it never needs to happen for its effectivity to be presumed' (Butler 1997: 106). Indeed, Althusser himself warns against taking its sequential character literally. Butler further states that 'interpellation [...] is not an event, but a certain way of *staging the call*' (Ibid.: 106-107). She then develops this in an interesting study of subject formation, focusing on the 'turn' that occurs in interpellation. Inspiring as they may be, it is obvious that the purpose of ethnographic analysis differs from hers or Althusser's. It is not my aim to explore how subjects come to exist in the first place—an ambition that, I believe, would be extremely difficult to reconcile with the nature of ethnographic research—but rather to trace how we become *particular kinds of* subjects in particular situations. For this purpose, I propose to take Althusser's policeman scene more literally (that is, in fact, more pragmatically-materially), and therefore more as an event (and, crucially, as we shall see, an *anticipated* event). With regard to the two episodes addressed in this text, a reduced and specified use of interpellation then concerns the ways in which we emerge as particular subjects located in relation to regimes of sovereignty and mobility regulation. And the difference between the two episodes, I suggest, can then be understood through our (non-)anticipation of an actual material interaction whereby a border officer explicitly hails us, and whereby all involved understand this event as one of interpellation by a uniformed person who occupies a specific position in the technology of statecraft. If deployed in a limited and precise manner, it seems to me, interpellation can be a useful conceptual tool to ethnographically explore episodes like the ones on which this text rests.

The link with border checks is thus obvious. The crossing of a policed border is an occasion on which an explicit enactment of interpellation occurs more or less systematically. Border officers hail us with a variation on 'hey you there', and, documents in hand, we turn towards her/him, becoming a particular subject in the process. Yet there are some important, potentially productive, complications at work here. Let's briefly address two of them here.

A first complication concerns the scale of the entities involved. Border control procedures do not represent straightforward interpellation by a border officer as an embodiment of an ISA—or at least it is not only that. The ideological apparatus that s/he embodies is of course channelled through the infrastructure and the personnel of any particular state, but the process of subject(ificat)ion entailed in her/his hailing takes shape with regard to a *state system*: an emerging globalising regime of mobility regulation in which our particular positionings are determined by our certification through documents issued by a certain state to embrace us (Jansen 2009). The operation of this regime involves an increasing number of actors who are not traditionally associated with state institutions. The documents, of course, are state-issued, and the officer is normally a state agent (as testified, for example, by his uniform, his workplace, his work instructions, his training and his pay-check), but the scale on which this interpellation operates is that of a system consisting of states and their claims to territorial sovereignty. And the checks at border posts, the outer limits of those claims, are increasingly embedded in a broader set of procedures, many of which take place away from the border, and well in advance of any crossing. As we shall see, alongside the decentring of the state, central to Michel Foucault's critical engagements with and elaborations on Althusser's theory of subject formation (e.g. 1975, 1990), an ethnographic analysis of border crossings may thus need to recentre it, but shift scales.

Of course, we never actually encounter this 'state system', nor is it an entity out there with its own agentive capacity, but our actions assume some semblance of it. Like the 'state effect' (Mitchell 1999), in practice, it emerges to us through real and imagined interactions: our positioning is at least partly grounded in our own or some vicarious experience of interpellating interactions similar to the one we do or do not anticipate at the border we approach. Our heightened awareness of the geopolitical in the second episode—evoked by the route we take and the reason for this choice, the nationalised, border-related devastation around us, A.'s consular procedure, etc.—thus channels us into becoming particular subjects through our particular location with regard to a 'state system'. The very fact that we are much less aware of this in the first episode is precisely a result of a luxury afforded to us by this same 'system',

which, of course, changes over time. With regard to subject formation in general, then, Butler may be right that hailing never needs to occur for it to be effective, but for the kind of ethnographic analysis I am proposing here, it seems that the particular way in which we become particular subjects in these episodes does rely on at least some past and expected events.

This brings us to the second complication. The most obvious descriptive difference between what goes on in the cars in the two episodes is that we are—literally—approaching the border in different ways. As we drive through the flat lowland fields towards the Netherlands-Belgium border in the 1970s, the Datsun takes a rural road unmarked by a border post. The Jansen household does this out of habit. The Peugeot that meanders through the scorched mountains of Herzegovina in 2000 approaches the BiH-Croatia border from this particular direction due to the one-entry visa in A.'s SRJ passport. The difference in interpellation here concerns a more general difference in the way we approach the border: it is not just about which road we have taken and why, but also about what kind of interaction we *anticipate* or don't anticipate. And this difference, which conditions a difference in the people in the two cars and the interaction between them, is due to the specific relationship between the state-issued documents that certify us and the relevant regime of sovereignty governing interpellation at the specific border crossing we are approaching (and, as our conversations or lack of them indicate, more broadly too). Let us now look a little closer at this anticipatory dimension.

anticipation

Althusser's examples, particularly the one of the hailing policeman, seem to downplay this anticipatory dimension of interpellation, but his analysis does actually leave room for it. For him, subjects are *always already* interpellated. Interpellation even starts before we are born: 'the child is therefore always-already a subject, appointed as a subject in and by the specific familial ideological configuration in which it is "expected" once it has been conceived' (Ibid.: 176). After that, it relies on continuous performance: the very routine act of responding to interpellation in all kinds of ways continually produces us as subjects. This view, it seems to me, suggests that anticipation can be expected to play an important role in many different forms of interpellation.

Approaching the Netherlands-Belgium border in the late 1970s, my mother, my father, my brother and I do not anticipate any hailing by any official embodying any order of states and mobility between them. There is of course the possibility of control by a 'flying patrol', but this is something we hardly anticipate as a probability. If it does occur, it will be away from the actual border, and we have no reason to believe that the Belgian and Dutch documents that certify us will fail to secure trouble-free legal passage. So we do not expect to be hailed in a border check—as particular concrete subjects of a certain age, a certain gender, a certain citizenship, and so on—but we are able to leave room for the possibility of some control without anxiety. Of course, this carefree atmosphere of relative non-anticipation is *itself* rooted in a particular regime of sovereignty, and interpellation *does* therefore occur: although we may not reflect explicitly on it, we are emerging as particular subjects through our relative non-anticipation. The fact that the border we are approaching now is a Benelux border, that it can, on this road, be crossed without any controls, and that we have documents certifying our legal movement there, forms the condition of possibility for it.

We do not expect to be hailed but this does not mean that nothing at all happens in anticipation of 1970s Datsun crossing the Netherlands-Belgium border. All those frequent crossings, by car, by foot, by bicycle, by train, have not made the experience entirely unnoticed or neutral for me. The four of us have travelled to Hungary, and the visa applications, the five-hour wait and the detailed searches and interrogation at the militarised Austria-Hungary border have given us a vivid experience of the fact that border-crossings can be very different. My brother and I especially remember a bullet-holed car next to the border post, incompletely covered with tarpaulin. Our parents saw it too, but did not really explain anything about it—which perhaps made it an even more powerful memory. Approaching the Netherlands-Belgium border through the flat fields of my mother's youth has a rather less spectacular feel, but there is a vague tension—one that fascinates me and that I cherish. There is the shudder of mystery

as we pass the alleged *jenever* distillery. Always, for my brother and me, there is some lingering hope that a 'flying patrol' will suddenly appear. I have not been there at least fifteen, perhaps twenty, years, but writing this exercise makes me realise that, were I to pass by today, I can probably point out the place—an earthen path shielded by bushes—where I then imagined they could appear. But we do not expect this to happen—for our anticipation is, of course, for a large part grounded in past experience.

Approaching the BiH-Croatia border in 2000, on the other hand, A., B. and I do anticipate being hailed as subjects certified by particular documents. Long before we are even close to being hailed by a border officer, long before we are required to stop, produce our documents, fulfil his requests and answer his questions (and yes, we expect it to be a man), we are interpellated precisely through our anticipation. Our anticipation that this is what will happen if we wish to legally cross the border conditions a large part of the form and the content of our actions and our interactions in the car. We enact particular forms of subject(ificat)ion—we emerge as particular subjects through a specific relationship between the documents that certify us and the event of the border crossing that we prepare for. While this is of course not the only basis on which we interact, we become—through our common trajectory and our conversations and silences about it—citizens of certain states to each other. Note that it is not, or at least not primarily, our pre-existing 'cultural' differences as persons that grew up in different contexts that position us in those ways. Rather, this occurs through a process whereby we recognise each other as taking up particular positions in a current regime of sovereignty and mobility regulation—the unequal positions that are allotted to us due to the documents that certify us.

Driving towards the BiH-Croatia border in 2000, then, our affective engagements are less vague than in the 1970s Benelux episode. The (inter)actions in the car have to do with the particularities of the region and the contested border we know to be nearby. We do not know about distilleries in this region (although I do today), but the landscape is important to understand the mood in the grey Peugeot. And much of that can only be understood precisely in the context of a contest regarding sovereignty. The devastation and 'nationalisation' of the (former) built environment, and even of the rocks and trees (through flags and graffiti) have been conditioned by the proximity of the border between two Yugoslav republics and by the conflict over its upgrading to a state border. The emptiness of the region is partly due to its harsh climate and infertile land, but also to it having been a much raided outpost of the Ottoman Empire for many centuries. In addition to taking in these things-witnesses around us, our affective engagements are infused, as I indicated above, by our awareness of a relationship between the travel documents we carry, and an event we prepare for. All three of us have experienced similar events many times at many borders, post-Yugoslav ones and others. Certified by different documents, those experiences are unequal amongst us, but not in a constant manner. In the 1970s, when my parents, my brother and I went through long visa applications for our trip to Hungary (and B., with her US passport, would have needed the same), A. could have travelled across the Austria-Hungary border (as well as across many other ones in the world) without a visa in her 'red' Yugoslav passport. In 2000 she needs visa for almost all states in Europe and most states in the World, whereas B. and I don't. And even this example is not straightforward because, despite our annoyance with Hungarian consular bureaucracy, even as a kid I could not fail to realise that my Belgian passport was still much higher up in the rankings of desirability than was that of citizens of Hungary (if they had one at all). This is not the case for A. in 2000: there are few states (in Europe, and possibly even elsewhere) where her SRJ passport would be considered desirable. Certainly not in Hungary.

confession

As we inch closer to the BiH-Croatia border post through the arid mountains of Herzegovina, we anticipate entering a particular environment with people and things, all absent from our anticipation at the Benelux border in the 1970s. Perhaps a queue of cars, perhaps not. But certainly barriers, signposts, flags, coats of arms, a container containing an office, paperwork, stamps—all materialisations of sovereignty claims by a particular state, located on this spatial boundary of its claims. Crucially, we anticipate people in uniforms to literally *hail* us, and we

prepare for a more or less routine interaction with them. We know to expect this because of past experience, whether our own or that of others. Our knowledge concerns not only factors common to most border posts, but also certain other ones, related to the cultural intimacy of the post-Yugoslav states. There is a script we anticipate this interaction to conform to, and while there is some room for variation, we consider this to be overwhelmingly at the border officer's discretion. Our experience also allows us to leave space for possible variations in the script: a friendly greeting, a grunt, a bodily gesture, a question about our destination, a flirtatious look, some innuendo about the scene of a male driver with two female passengers, a moment of hostility at the sight of a SRJ passport with a 'Serbian' name and a Beograd address, a joke, some linguistic confusion at the sight of a Belgian and a US passport... We know this can happen, but then again it may not. In any case, it will not surprise us if it does. In fact, we joke about it as we drive. Partly our jokes and conversations about border crossings are due to the fact that we are slightly nervous. We expect we may be told to open the trunk and show our luggage for inspection—en route we have already ascertained that the amount of cigarettes we carry is within the legal limit. We prepare our documents for inspection well before we approach the border post. We know our papers are in order, but one never knows. What we anticipate more or less as a certainty—the bare script—is an interaction along the lines of a verbal or non-verbal demand for our passports and car documents. Are we anticipating to confess, to tell the truth about ourselves?

On the basis of research in a Canadian airport, Mark Salter (2007) proposes Foucault's notion of confession as a useful tool to study the conditions under which plane passengers (or would-be passengers) cooperate with examinations of their citizenship status, their characteristics, and their character. Foucault developed much of his work in critical dialogue with Marxist theorisations such as Althusser's, and he rejected both the latter's emphasis on language and, especially, his value-laden notion of ideology and its dependence on claims of insight into a reality obscured by it. Yet his work on the production of subjects ('*asujetissement*') parallels Althusser's in many ways. Equally anti-humanist, and, as we shall see, often equally sweepingly evoking the 'success' of domination through his notion of 'discourse', Foucault proposed to focus on the particular technologies through which this occurred.

In modern Western governmentality, Foucault argues, confession, defined as 'all those procedures by which the subject is incited to produce a discourse of truth about his sexuality which is capable of having effects on the subject himself' (1980: 216), became a key ritual for the production of truth, functioning alongside and increasingly replacing other forms such as accusation, observation and demonstration (1990: 58-59; 1997: 84). Originating in Christianity but later professionalised e.g. in medicine, bureaucracy, justice, education and intimate relationships, Foucault shows that rather than on actual sexual acts, confession shifted the focus to a reconstruction of the desires and thoughts that were retrospectively identified as the reasons that led up to it (1990: 63). Thus, over time, he suggests, there was a tendency to include in confession not only what the confessor might want to keep hidden from others, but also that which s/he was presumed to unknowingly hide from her/himself (1990: 66). In this way, confession emerged as a major way to *produce* a truth, previously unknown to all involved. The truth at stake here is of a particular order: it is a truth about the self, about who the confessor is. Confession, then, is not to be understood as the owning up to past misdeeds. Despite appearances, Foucault's definition of confession as the 'disclosure of the self' (or 'hermeneutics of the self') does not refer to an uncovering of some kind of inner self that was already meaningful, but to an ultimately arbitrary interpretation of bodily experiences and urges that do not have any articulated meaning before the confession. In that way it makes an object called 'subject': it *produces* a subject out of a body. Foucault sees confession as an extremely widespread effect of power which we experience ever less as a constraining imposition, incorporating it instead as a route towards the freeing of truth within us (1990: 60). As such, it became a central procedure for the workings of 'disciplinary power' or 'biopower'.

In his work on criminality (1975) Foucault had shown how violent oppression by physical force was increasingly replaced by surveillance. In prisons, this involved visibility, but also routine interviews and tests creating a new 'domain of knowledge' around individualised prisoners. Such examination allowed objectification, which allowed 'arranging'—i.e. the

governing of objects that 'normalises' (through description, measurement, comparison, etc). The examination is thus the first step in making individual subjects that can be known and governed. Confession, it seems, can then be usefully seen as its counterpart on the side of the examinee—at least in certain question-based forms of examination, and only when successful. It is the channel through which examination of a presumed inner self (a subject as an object) becomes feasible and goes beyond normalisation in that it comes to constitute the truth and falsehood of subjects.

If understood in this way, Salter argues (2007), the mutually constituted procedure of confession and examination can be seen as a central technology in the policing of borders, and also in the process of interpellation by what he calls a 'globalising biopolitical order' through our subject(ificat)ion in its mobility regulation. For Salter mobility is a central axis of normality/deviance in the way that sexuality and criminality are for Foucault. Confession relies primarily on 'techniques of listening' (Foucault 1980: 214) and this is precisely what happens in the interaction between travellers and border officers: the latter listen as we 'tell the story of ourselves that defines us as docile, obedient sovereign subjects' (Salter 2007: 59). Submission, then, is the result: we become subjects by submitting to subjection.

As argued above, I believe it is important to emphasise that it is our *anticipation* of the examination/confession at the actual border post, the expectation that we will be hailed by the uniformed border officer, and the way we prepare for this, that is crucial to the particular process of subject formation at stake here. This shapes how we become particular subjects in the car. On our trip through south Herzegovina, our choice of route itself is shaped by the anticipation of the interpellating border check *per se*—it is a result of us being interpellated through the anticipation of being hailed at the border post in interaction with the documents that certify us as worthy of unequal degrees of cross-border movement in the current regime of sovereignty. It could further be argued that our slightly anxious, humorous and lamenting conversations are conditioned *particularly strongly* by the anticipation of the confessional dimension in the imminent examination. The relative lack of this in the 1970s Datsun approaching the Netherlands-Belgium borderline, then, is the other side of the same story. Anticipating a smooth crossing, tickled nevertheless by the never-to-be-excluded possibility of a 'flying patrol', we know that submission is highly unlikely to be made explicit here. However, if it does turn out to be necessary, we anticipate to comply with an enactment of our submission at the request of officials through examination and confession. In the Peugeot inching towards the BiH-Croatian border post in 2000, A., B. and I anticipate this enactment of submission-as-subject(ificat)ion as imminent. A., of course, has confessed in great detail already in the Croatian consular procedure in Beograd. 'Her data double', as Salter has it, 'has already traveled' (Ibid.: 57). She tells us about in the car—not in the form of an activity report, but in a detailed, affectively explicit lament of the ordeal, reaching into the order of sovereignty and mobility regulation that it is part of. As always, the time before confession, spent in anxious anticipation, is key, while the actual consular interactions, unpleasant as they are deemed to be, draw less comment.

submission and affective investment

Placing confession at the centre of this 'self-policing of transiting individuals' (Ibid.: 49), Salter draws particular attention to the anxiety this produces. His own and others' research show that this anxiety is recognised by border agents and that particular accumulated (and politically inflected) readings of it are deployed as an organising principle in border controls. I think most of us understand what Salter is talking about. Even as someone certified by a Belgian passport, I feel it sometimes, and I certainly have witnessed it in others during many border crossings, particularly amongst those certified by a relatively undesirable passport attempting to enter, for example, Belgium or the UK. I have also witnessed it frequently amongst those certified by a passport that marks them out as unpopular at a particular border (e.g. due to recent conflict or suspicions of smuggling). The grounds for anxiety are, of course, extremely unequally distributed, and within categories of mobility regulation people deal with it in many different ways too. Some probably remain stoic (and it is therefore difficult to know if they feel anxious at all), some chatter about it, many complain about it and many joke about it. In my experience

in South East Europe, in collective crossings by coach and by train, all of this climaxes in anticipation of the border crossing, often producing a sudden flurry of activity, noise, irritation and, above all, tension—particularly when the crossing occurs at night and involves waking people up. The border check itself, in my experience, is virtually always relatively orderly, silent and obedient. This is then often by what seems to be relief from anxiety: a laugh, a few cynical comments, dying down very soon after. Whatever the degree of anxiety, fear, or fury, ultimately, I have very, very rarely seen a case that did not result in relatively straightforward submission.

The success of confession as a disciplinary technique depends, of course, on our willingness to engage in it when instructed. Foucault's and Althusser's theories of *asujetissement* (subject(ifica)tion) help us to theorise how repression and force are not always necessary for us to be successfully subject(ifi)ed.¹ In Althusser's thinking we are interpellated precisely as being free: by actively responding to the policeman's call, we ourselves step into the subject position provided for us. We thus prove ideology's success by our 180 degree 'conversion'—or perhaps, as I argue in this text, by us *anticipating* this turn. We become part of the state as a subject by accepting being subjugated to it. Although he is careful to not present this as a fully closed circle, Althusser posits this apparent self-volition whereby we become a subject we already feel we are, and which we believe to be outside of ideology, as that what makes ideology successful. Yet, in his view, of course, it is ultimately false. 'What thus seems to take place outside ideology (to be precise, in the street), in reality takes place in ideology' (Ibid.: 175).

Foucault's attempt to reformulate such understandings ends up reproducing a similar impression of circularity. Again, the 'success' of *asujetissement* is largely implicitly assumed. Foucault decentres 'the state' from institutions of centralised sovereignty, but however dispersed, it remains *the spectre* hovering over his thinking (this becomes especially clear in his interviews, where it is more difficult to talk about 'Power' in the abstract). Doing away with ideology, Foucault does not reject the process of *asujetissement* as false, but his entire approach shows that he too sees the logic of subject(ificat)ion, for example through the mechanisms of examination/confession, as insidious, and its production of truth as arbitrary and misguided at best. In his work on sexuality, Foucault ends up presenting an almost hermetically closed circle of subjection, and even in the work on criminality the frequent references to 'resistance' and its plurality cannot dispel the overwhelming impression of effective domination. As mechanisms for *asujetissement*, confession and interpellation, then, are seen as particularly 'successful' precisely because of the insidious ways in which they involve people 'opening *themselves* up' to domination. But why would 'we' consent to that?

Judith Butler (1997) provides a very interesting critical exploration of this question. Zooming in on the stubborn paradox in theories of subject formation, Butler asks: if 'we' become subjects by turning around, who are the 'we' who do the turning? She does not propose to dissolve this paradox, but to redeploy it in a productive manner through a series of psychoanalytical explorations, leading her to explore the question *why* 'we' so readily submit to the subjection in order to subjectify. Butler uses the example of the policeman, which she treats as allegorical, and says: why do we turn around at all in the first place? To answer this question, left largely implicit by both Althusser and Foucault, she elaborates on the figure of the 'turn'. Butler emphasises the circularity of this movement, the success of which she too considers to be a result of its 'insidiousness' (1997: 6, 21), and then seeks a theoretical and political route to go beyond it. This requires, she argues, an understanding of the working of power in the psyche, which may lead us to recognise that which, in reiteration, exceeds the power that enacts the subject. One important dimension of Butler's approach is a focus on some kind of originary 'guilt' that pre-exists interpellation: *that*, she argues, is why we turn around.

Butler's inspirational explorations of the potential contributions of psychoanalytical insights to theories of subject formation open up very interesting routes for investigation. Ethnographically, however, it seems to me that they may help us to pose incisive questions but are extremely difficult to turn into effective conceptual tools beyond that. Perhaps ethnographic

¹ Gramsci's work on hegemony provides useful tools as well, but I my discriminatory geographical focus leads me to neglect him here because he is not from France.

research cannot expect to contribute much to understandings of this Ur-level of subject formation. Ethnographers elaborate on the theories of the social of their research subjects, and while they may critically turn them against themselves, perhaps this implies we always need, to a degree, already-formed subjects, paradoxes included (which is not to say *fully* formed). Psychoanalysis may thus inspire very interesting questions, but its value for formulating ethnographic answers, I think, is limited due to the difficulty to channel it empirically. In any case, for the episodes discussed here, I hope to show below, we do not need psychoanalysis, precisely because of our limited, pragmatic-material deployment of the notion of subject formation. We do not ask how subjects are formed in general terms, but how people become particular subjects in particular situations: here, the situation is one of anticipated crossings of state borders. If Butler (and Althusser, and Foucault) are interested in Power with a capital P, we are confronted here with concrete embodiments of it in a 'state system' that crystallises geopolitics of sovereignty and mobility regulation: the uniformed officer, the barrier, the visa queue, the paraphernalia of state borders, etc.

because we can and because it can: anticipation and submission

Complementing his analysis in another article of how the 'condition of mobility is rendered such that travellers facilitate their own entry into [a] state of exception where their rights are abrogated' (Salter 2006: 173), Salter emphasises the self-volition at work in confession heavily, culminating in this impassioned passage:

'Where have you been? Why? What did you buy? How long will you stay? As travelers are conditioned to confess their history, intentions, and identity, they submit to the examining power of the sovereign. This ritual of sovereign subjectivity enacts our obedience to the agents of government to constitute and authorize our identity. [...] The power of the state to expel or exclude any traveler, even citizens with no cause or appeal, is internalized into an anxiety of the confession. *We do not worry "will the state exclude me because it can?" But rather we think: "have I told the whole truth? Is my story believable?"*' (Salter 2007: 59, my italics)

Perhaps Salter is reading somewhat too much in Foucault's work, which, after all, aims to construct a theory of the emergence of 'the self' and may not be so well suited for direct application in an empirical analysis of a border check. Yet it is probably not a coincidence that, in his attempt to deploy Foucault's conceptual toolbox to a particular interaction, Salter ends up with an assumption of a more or less closed circle: we submit through confession, he argues, and not only are we willing to confess, we actually invest in its truth production as truth production. But is this really the case? Even if submission—i.e. obedience—is present, does this necessarily rely on such investment by the particular subject that is made in the process? Does it require it? Perhaps this statement is grounded less in empirical research and more in the seductive elegance of applying Foucaultian terminology to airport border procedures that appear relatively smooth and mechanical?

When analysing the two episodes, if we conceive of subject formation within a reduced field of relevance, the question 'why do we turn?'—or, why are we anticipating to turn?—can be answered, I suggest, without reference to affective investment on the side of the persons in the cars. As we approach the borders, we do not feel guilt (presumably, what we would be guilty of is some form of mobility). Althusser's example of the hailing policeman, and his reference to 'having something on one's conscience' immediately thereafter (Althusser 1971: 174), may lead us to assume that we are dealing with a pedestrian who did, or wanted to, cross a red light, for example. Butler successfully develops this 'guilt' dimension into her account of the psychic dimensions of subject formation. Yet should we not leave open the possibility that perhaps the pedestrian did not do anything wrong at all, and perhaps s/he felt s/he had nothing to hide either? If called on the street, by a policeman, or indeed by anyone else, do we really need a bad conscience before we turn around?

In the Datsun and in the Peugeot, no transgression—past, planned, or feared—seems relevant. In the second episode we are on that particular road precisely in order *not* to transgress anything, yet this is not a consequence of guilt, nor even of any moral sense of duty on our side. Quite simply, we submit in anticipation because want to reach our destination in Dubrovnik, which requires us to cross a state border. In other words, the only reason for us to be

on this road in the first place is *because we have to*. But one scale up it is of course also *because we can*: appropriately certified by documents, all three of us anticipate legal entry into Croatia, and reaching Dubrovnik, after all, is our objective. The way we anticipate the border check is partially grounded in previous experiences of all kinds of border crossings, and in specific and generic knowledge of and experience with mobility regulation. None of us has any particular affective investment in the border we are approaching, nor in the 'state system' it embodies (this shifting order of sovereignty that we encounter, for example, through mobility regulation). In her investigation of subject formation in general, Butler argues that we are driven by an 'anticipatory desire' (1997: 111) which is mirrored in an expectation of a 'promised identity' that we will gain by being hailed (1997: 108). To understand how we become particular subjects to each other as we approach the borders in the episodes at the centre of this text, I suggest, we do not need 'desire'. All we need is anticipation (or lack of it) of an interpellating event, which may include a confessional dimension. It is through this anticipation (or lack of it), which may be anxious or relaxed, that our submission has been secured and that we have been interpellated—i.e. that we become particular subjects.

In the red Datsun approaching the Netherlands-Belgium border in the 1970s, our anticipation of an easy non-policed crossing means we do not prepare for anything at all. Yet if a flying patrol turns up, we will be obedient. At no point is there any indication that, were such a patrol to appear, we would accelerate sharply or swerve into the fields to try and avoid an enactment of our submission. This is so *because we can*. We don't really have any reason to swerve: we anticipate that the documents that certify us will make the interaction painless and quick. In the grey Peugeot meandering towards the BiH-Croatia border in 2000, long before we reach the barrier, we know we are willing to provide a confession to the examination we anticipate. We prepare our documents for inspection. Not once do we consider trying an alternative route to cross the border unnoticed and illegally, not once do we consider telling the officer to piss off, or to break the barrier by driving full-speed into Croatian territory. Indeed, the very fact that we are on this minor mountainous road is a consequence of our submission in anticipation. In this episode, the anxiety is certainly greater than in the first one, but again, we expect that the documents that certify us will secure us passage. After all, A. has already submitted to the consular procedure, precisely for that reason.

In both cases, then, our awareness of the relationship between the documents that certify the people in the car and the regime of sovereignty at work, leads us to submission. In the second episode we expect this to be enacted in an event at the border post, in the first one we don't, but we would comply were a flying patrol to turn up. We are thus successfully interpellated already in anticipation: we subject to and are subjectified by a regime of sovereignty. Yet do we believe this to be 'outside of ideology'? Is our self-volition a sign of our investment in the truth being produced in this process of subject formation? Do we not worry 'will the state exclude me because it can?', but rather 'have I told the whole truth? Is my story believable'?

I was never a Wunderkind, and I was not particularly well-versed in ideology critique in the 1970s, so in the case of my childhood engagements with the Netherlands-Belgium border, I am hardly dissecting ideology behind border regimes. Yet my fascination with the 'flying patrol' seems to be, at least partly, the result precisely of it being such an obvious embodiment of what Althusser would call ideology. As I imagine it in the back of the car approaching the border, it would consist of a few men in a car wanting to see our papers because we are crossing an invisible line in some fields. And that line, like the line between my uncle's farmyard and the street, or between my grandparents' house and that of their neighbours, demarcates two territories in a state system. As a child, of course, I do not understand this logic of territorial sovereignty—indeed I am not sure if I understand it much better today: it is so *obviously* arbitrary, so *obviously* human-made, so *obviously* contingent, that any investment in the kind of truth that is produced here would require some effort that I would recognise as 'ideological'. Barring that, all we have is plain submission.

In the Peugeot on the serpentine of south Herzegovina, our conversations display explicit critical engagement with the 'ideologies' at work, with what we consider obscene attempts to naturalise border-drawing. We do not perform ideological compliance, believing it to be outside

of ideology. Rather on the contrary, we anticipate our submission precisely as a part of an ideological construct. Our cynical detachment—couched in lamentations and jokes—testifies to a distance that defies any ideological incorporation or investment in its truth-production. No, it does not lead us to try and develop an alternative, to avoid submission. Yet our conversations unfold in acquiescence with an expectation shaped by a particular order of sovereignty and mobility regulation we absolutely experience—in Althusser's terms—as 'ideological'. And the anxiety we experience, it seems to me, is not an internalised effect of the truth-claiming nature of the 'confessionary complex'. Foucault developed this notion to discuss subject formation and the historical emergence of 'the self', and it seems problematic to me to apply it wholesale to border checks. While it remains useful to think about the procedure itself, about the mechanics of it, and to a degree even about some potential anxieties involved, any blanket application relies on shaky assumptions of affective investment by those who anticipate confession. In the Peugeot approaching the BiH-Croatia border, quite contrary to what Salter argues, I would say, we are not invested in the process to such a degree that we worry whether 'we will tell the whole truth'. We *do* worry about whether 'our story is believable', but the reason for this is precisely that we *are* worried that the state may exclude us—or more precisely in this border-crossing, one of us: A.—'because it can'. No more and no less than that.

two epilogues

As our red Datsun 100a approaches the Netherlands-Belgium border in the 1970s, I am too busy or too tired to notice the suspected distillery. But just before that (or perhaps just after that), without anyone mentioning it, I will know the precise point where we cross the border. My brother and I, just like our parents, will know exactly when we pass the line of sovereignty that crosscuts this rural road. This is the one thing about the border that I anticipate in the back of the car: The marker that predominates when I recall our crossings on this road is not one of vision. Perhaps this is because we often cross this border in the dark, or perhaps because my brother and I are often too busy playing around. So we drive south through the misty, low-lying fields. Brown-and-white cows and black-and-white cows observe us. And then, I feel and hear the sudden change in friction due to the texture of the road's surface, and particularly the shift in rhythm between the slabs of concrete or asphalt that make it up. We cross the border. As we pass the earthen road with the bushes on the left, there is no flying patrol anywhere to be seen. My parents don't seem to mind. My brother and I do. Despite years of anticipatory subject(ificat)ion, and to our great disappointment, we were never once stopped by a 'flying patrol'.

Following the meandering road in south Herzegovina in 2000, A., B. and I share the exhilaration of passing the last mountain pass and seeing the Adriatic Sea appear before us. I have done it dozens of times, but it never fails to thrill me. The grey Peugeot 309 descends and takes a left onto the main coastal road. We stop in one of the numerous petrol stations to take advantage of price asymmetries. Our passports and car documents at the ready, we approach the border post. Flags, signposts and coats-of-arms announce we are about to enter Croatia. There is no queue. The barrier is open. We anxiously eye the border officer who lethargically leans against the container that serves as his office. He seems hot, tired, and uncomfortable in his light blue uniform. Remaining in the shade of the container he waves us through with a minimal movement of his head. Entering Croatia, we scream in disbelief.

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