

## **We have never been so bounded: Pandemic, territoriality, and mobility\***

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### **Abstract**

In this intervention, I examine the bordering dynamics in the nomosphere configured by the global pandemic crisis and their territorial consequences, drawing on an autoethnography of the impact of bordering on everyday life and academic practices. On the one hand, I rely on my observation of Switzerland, and Europe in general, to discuss the bodily and everyday experiences with borders at different scales; on the other, as a British National (Overseas) passport holder in an attempt to get access to Taiwan for doing fieldwork, I document the difficulties in dealing with the border control, showing how the influence of geopolitics and contested identities on the research praxis is complicated by the bordering during the pandemic. These legal geographies of territoriality demonstrate that borders are not only constantly becoming and fluid, but also more discursively present and materially visible during the pandemic than other times. The work of bordering, I argue, produces an uneven geography which deserves our attention.

### **Keywords**

autoethnography; COVID-19; legal geography; nomosphere; territoriality

## **1. Introduction: An autoethnographical enquiry of the nomosphere**

We have never profoundly experienced geography, borders, and territory until now.

Perhaps this claim might sound impulsive. Some geographers might challenge my assertion by saying that, “No! Borders matter, territory matters, geography matters. We, geographers, always bear this in mind.” Likewise, Alec Murphy (2020, p. 39) recently reminds us that “we are far from living in a post-territorial world.” My view might also be criticised for overlooking the severe situations where many are already suffering in many corners of the world, including the strengthened and visible presence of the US–Mexico borders against immigrants, and its transnational, territorial effects (Doucette & Lee, 2019). However, to many people, especially the general public – or in Miriam Tedeschi’s (2020) words, the “regular” citizens – who are not frequently faced with such episodes and vocabularies of territoriality, they did not always, or they were not aware of how they,

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encounter borders, unlike how they do right now amidst the global pandemic, during which the law's geographical relations to territories and bodies are made visible in the form of borders and boundaries. This work of bordering demonstrates the concrete and material manifestations of borders at different scales over time. While the spatial parameters of some "fixed" territorial borders and boundaries, such as that of states, cities, workplaces, homes, and private properties, remain unchanged, the functions and meanings of borders have changed, regarding access, mobility, and control.

Bordering is concerned with access to territory, affecting the (im)mobility of people and things, and determining who and what are allowed to move across borders. During the global pandemic, the changing meanings of borders and the performative work of bordering, I argue, produced an uneven geography, which I want to illustrate in this short piece. This somewhat neglected lesson of the global pandemic deserves attention. The significance of this lesson is that knowledge about territoriality is not merely something discursively articulated in the academic debates, but it has a real presence which makes an impact on our everyday life and academic practices. Some years ago, when I was an undergraduate in Hong Kong, Alec Murphy, who was visiting in my department, gave a lecture on how territory continues to be alluring, which was published as a journal article around then (Murphy, 2013). Being impressed by his exploration of geographical concepts against the rhetoric of "borderless world," I was attracted into the academic discourses which were brought into debates. However, admittedly I could not comprehend and experience it easily, given my geographical imagination was too narrowed and limited in Hong Kong and some other parts of East Asia at that time – neither could I today, honestly. But my recent tremendous difficulty in getting access to Taiwan, the fieldwork site for my doctoral dissertation, due to the pandemic border control, and various observations and experiences during the pandemic – which configured a specific set of nomospheric situations and settings (Delaney, 2010) – have prompted me to reflect upon territoriality, borders, and mobility. The concept of nomosphere has been enriched by legal geographers in the last two decades, but for the purpose here it suffices to be understood as "the cultural-material environs that are constituted by the reciprocal materialization of 'the legal,' and the legal signification of the 'socio-spatial,' and the practical, performative engagements through which such constitutive moments happen and unfold" (p. 25).

In the context of this crisis, autoethnography helps connect personal observations and experiences to a more nuanced understanding of the social world (Besio, 2020; Tedeschi, 2020). The discussion in this short piece is grounded in two nomospheric situations. Firstly, I rely on my observations of Switzerland, and Europe in general, to discuss the bodily and everyday experiences with borders at different scales. Secondly, I account for the difficulties in dealing with the border control of Taiwan to show how the influence of geopolitics and contested identities on the research praxis is further complicated by bordering during the pandemic. To be clear, I am not suggesting that this intervention presents a generalised and universal narrative because my own experiences do not represent others' experiences. I am reflexively aware of my privileged position as a salaried university researcher allowing me to make ends meet during this crisis. The precarious populations, including asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants, always struggle with borders for the matter of life and death, and this crisis has even worsened

their situations. Diversities of race, gender, age, and nationality are suffering during the ongoing crisis. It does not do justice to speak for them based on my own living experiences, which, however, are still a real exemplar of the variegated lifeworld. My own experiences are never isolated, but because of the complexities of human territoriality, the self is always relational and mediating with other actants (Raffestin, 2012; see also Klauser, 2012) – hence the world is being made as the effect of how we altogether perform territory. This is why I chose to use the pronoun “we” rather than “I” in the title of this article. Reflecting upon the usefulness of ethnography in the craft of research and scholarship, Irus Braverman (2014) calls for an inward expansion of methodology, that legal geographers should be more reflexive about “how we think, work, and engage with our world, on *how* we come to write what we write” (p. 139, original emphasis). Responding to the call for a methodological turn, autoethnography can be useful in investigating the nomospheric situations, which might seem mundane and ordinary but should not be taken-for-granted, and their profound world-making effects. For this reason, I consider this intervention can contribute to the methodological agenda of the legal geography scholarship.

This short article presents two autoethnographical accounts in the next two sections, which are followed by a remark on the uneven geography that emerged from the pandemic.

## **2. Bodily and everyday bordering experiences in the “borderless world”**

During the global pandemic, as it has been said, new spatial patterns of social, political, and economic life emerged. We re-discovered and utilised the capacity of telecommunication technologies to transform geography and further accelerate time–space compression again after the popularisation of the Internet. In the academic community, hosting lectures, meetings, seminars, and conferences online can now transcend the borders. It is true that, in my experience during this time, I have been sitting in front of my computer at my cosy studio flat near Lake Geneva in Switzerland to attend different seminars and meetings which are organised by some institutions around the world. If those events were organised before the pandemic, they were supposed to be some internal events for a targeted audience, most probably within an academic department or learned society. But the widespread usage of videotelephony software and apps (e.g., Zoom and WebEx) and social network platforms (such as Facebook and Twitter), on which advertising materials go viral, allows academics to choose to attend any kind of online academic events as they wish, as long as they do not miscalculate the difference between time zones. All these indications signify that we now have more frequent interactions with our fellow academics than ever, and it might seem that knowledge exchange is likely to be more productive, free, and open. As an immediate reaction to this aspect of life, it might sound reasonable that territory and borders do not matter anymore in this seemingly borderless world.

However, this is not true. The presence of borders has not been so concretised and materialised as it is now. Although the new international travel restrictions imposed during the pandemic might not be significant for those who do not travel, they particularly affect a considerable proportion of the global population, including asylum seekers, international students, transnational corporations’ employees, and to some extent, tourists. Since the late-twentieth century, increasingly affordable travel costs have enhanced global mobility, enabling more frequent cultural exchange, business cooperation, and tourism between

places in a popular way. For a part of the global population, especially the relatively wealthy citizens in OECD countries, travel restrictions have been largely reduced. Before the pandemic, many of these OECD states enacted international agreements with other states to make border entry procedures as simple and easy as they could be by enabling visa-free travel or rendering visa applications as a formality. While some international travellers from other countries are subject to prudent visa and custom checks, even interrogations, at the border, people moving between wealthier countries are often free-to-go upon their arrival at the airport. In some specific nomospheric settings, such as Schengen Europe, although the customs and control checkpoints are materially built at the borders between countries, we often just ignore them because mobility across countries is free without barriers. Without on-duty law enforcement officers, these border materialities seem to have no effect at all. But it is during the pandemic that these border materialities limit our (im)mobility.

Borders are not only static dividing lines but also always becoming and fluid. Located in the middle of somewhere, borders make in-between spaces of transitions and movements. Borders and boundaries also have their changing, disputed, and negotiated presence at all geographical scales between not only nation-states but also everyday spaces. Geographers share a long-standing interest in how borders and boundaries reproduce, arrange, and organise power relations, social life, and territory. All livings on the Earth somehow seek to delimit their territories within some form of boundaries. Human territoriality was distinguishably theorised by Claude Raffestin (1986, 2012) as territorial relations which are mediated by actors with their labours and resources, and can be seen by some territorial signs in the everyday life, and by Robert Sack (1986) as spatial strategies to control and affect a territory. My reading is that both understandings are compatible, and we can observe their manifestations during the pandemic. Even if we understand territoriality in terms of spatial strategies, we must not overlook that those strategies are forward-looking to reshape our territorial relations with others, and they require us to mediate the deployment of resources, both material and immaterial, both labour and semiotic. Territoriality is implicated in our everyday spatial practices in relation to property and mobility, ranging from the garden fencing outside a house (Blomley, 2016) to the regulation of transnational flow of people (Stock, 2020).

Territory is “the result of the production of actors,” Raffestin (2012, p. 126) argues, and hence “the relational system is just as important as the material realm.” The importance of the relational system and the material realm can arguably be highlighted by borders which – according to Raffestin’s theory of territoriality, borders, and limits – serve as the mediator of territorial relations and have four social functions: to translate, to regulate, to differentiate, and because of the first three, to relate (Raffestin, 1986). Anssi Paasi (2019), among others, understands contemporary borders with two modalities, namely *discursive landscapes of social power* and *technical landscapes of social control*. The pandemic, I contend, can foreground how borders are materially and discursively visible. While borders are materially present somewhere, taking different forms, and not restricted to nation-state borders, simultaneously bordering as a process involves various mediated relations between actants at many different sites. During the lockdown in many countries, people were all grounded and bounded by the territory of their homes. Work from home, online

shopping, and virtual gathering became ordinary activities of everyday life, which produce the territorial consequence for us to be grounded and bounded under different pandemic control measures. Most of us have never been so bounded for such a long time period in our life. Yet, while teleworking has become a norm for some people, many others still need to take the risk to continue their essential work in hospitals, grocery stores, or gas stations. On some occasions, entry to foreign countries is allowed given that some laws are enacted to require quarantine, during which these potentially contaminated people are grounded over a specific time period; but exemption is granted for some categories of people, not only essentially for the cross-border workers (such as those who reside in France and work in Geneva, Switzerland), but also for commercial and political reasons. Uneven geographies emerged in the wake of the pandemic. Thinking and interpreting our experiences and observations during this crisis of a pandemic with the theory of borders and limits can help us to understand more about territoriality and the borders in both the formalised political arrangements and everyday life.

When the Swiss borders shared with France, Germany, Italy, and Austria were closed for containing the spread of the virus during the lockdown, some barriers and roadblocks were set up in the streets. In the past, residents around those borderlands did not take much notice of the actual presence and location of the border unless they looked at a map. But with the reappearance of “a barbed wire-topped barrier that split Switzerland and Germany during World War Two and that was removed long ago” (Kern, 2020) and the law enforcement officers, the borders become materially visible, and we knew they marked the territory to limit how far we can go. Even within a country, we also have not experienced the presence of such boundaries. During the second wave of the pandemic in Switzerland, due to federalism, some cantons implemented stricter measures than others. For instance, Geneva and Vaud are two nearby cantons in Francophone Switzerland. The canton of Geneva ordered all the hairdressers to close in November 2020; what then happened was that Genevans went to Vaud for this service. Consequently, the canton of Geneva relaxed the restriction because, according to a state councillor, “it is unacceptable that Genevans go to Vaud to do what is forbidden in Geneva” (“Geneva to Relax Some Coronavirus Restrictions,” 2020). We know there are differences between the cantons, such as their distinct cultural roots and historical trajectories, but it is the pandemic that has put the boundaries to work so that they have an impact on everyday life. In her very creative work of a comic documenting her family’s bike trip in Geneva, cycling near the border between Switzerland and France, Juliet Fall (2020) reminds us of how borders were made material and how bodies encountered them during the pandemic. This comic can also be interpreted as visualising how the borders translate signs and meanings, regulating the limit of movements, differentiating actants, and relating different time-spaces.

As another measure to combat virus transmission, we keep a distance from people in our everyday life. While many have called this social distance, in fact this is a physical distance. A physical distance should not stop us from interacting with people, taking care of them, and sharing what we have with others. We still socialise with people, the only difference is that we have drawn a boundary around our bodies. I suggest that the presence of this boundary is bodily, concrete, and geographical, following that Fall (2020, p. 778) narrates in her comic, “our own bodies are sites and spaces for connecting the global and

the intimate.” During the lockdown and the most recent time, wearing face masks indeed performs territorial boundary work. Consider where we put on a mask and take it off – it happens at the boundary. Wearing masks, in some jurisdictions, is not mandatory in the streets and public open spaces, but it is necessary when we walk into social spaces such as restaurants, shops, malls, commercial buildings, libraries, museums, and schools, regardless of whether they are private property or not. Some drivers would hang their face mask on the rear-view mirror, and when they leave the vehicle (a more individual space) to enter the store at the gas station (a more social space where we might meet people and we need to wear masks for protecting everyone), they would put it on. Some pedestrians would just tie the face mask on their arm, and when they need to enter a shop, they wear it. Their practices of wearing the mask and taking it off actually alert us of our movement between places. We are disciplined in the way that our actions are bounded and monitored under surveillance because, despite our self-awareness of face masks, guards will ensure everyone follows the rules, and sometimes we need to check-in and check-out with mobile apps which are used for tracing the movement of people and, more importantly, that of the virus. All these works are bordering, and the boundary could change depending on the new measures.

### **3. Bordering and academic praxis**

Researchers too. The pandemic has disrupted our academic routines, including research plans, fieldwork, conference participation, and so on. We inevitably need to deal with this shift towards a new research paradigm by admitting the existence of the new situation and adjusting our plans. Given the travel restrictions imposed by many countries, many researchers who intended to do fieldwork are bounded. I am no exception. As a researcher employed by a university in Switzerland, I planned to do fieldwork in Taiwan. While the Taiwanese government has relaxed the travel restrictions to foreigners gradually after mid-2020, I encountered enormous difficulties in moving my body across the border and gaining access to my fieldwork site.

My contested political identity failed to take me across the border to enter Taiwan. In my case, if my colleagues at my university, or any other researchers working around the world, want to go to Taiwan for fieldwork, they could apply for an entry visa. As far as I know, they could probably obtain it. Except for holders of residence permits or entry permits, all Hong Kong residents, Macau residents, and Mainland Chinese are not allowed to enter Taiwan<sup>1</sup>. I am categorised as a Hong Kong resident under the travel restriction schemes, although I am not living in Hong Kong for the reason that I reside and work in Switzerland, and even though I am in possession of a British National (Overseas) passport<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The only exception was during the period from 1 to 14 January 2021; because of the emergence of the new strains of the virus, the Taiwanese government tightened the entry restrictions for two weeks so that all travellers without a residence permit or entry permit are forbidden from entering the country, except foreign nationals for diplomatic, humanitarian, and commercial reasons. Since mid-January, foreign nationals can get entry permits for all non-tourism purposes, while individuals from China, Hong Kong, and Macau without residence in Taiwan are still being banned from entry.

<sup>2</sup> British National (Overseas) is a category of British nationality for Hong Kong residents before the sovereignty transfer in 1997, while the Chinese and Hong Kong governments do not acknowledge this nationality and had been treating its passport as a travel document only. After the United Kingdom government had promised the British National (Overseas) passport holders a path to citizenship, the Chinese and Hong Kong governments do not recognise this passport as any form of identity proof or travel document starting from 31 January 2021.

The definition of Hong Kong residents is not exclusively applied to inhabitants within the territory of Hong Kong. According to Taiwan's travel restriction, regardless of where one lives in the world, as long as one does not have passports other than the Hong Kong passport or the British National (Overseas) passport, one is categorised as a Hong Kong resident. Even if one has established residence in other regions in the world, or has a salaried job elsewhere, one is still a Hong Kong resident. My entry application has failed due to such a bordering process, which occurred in the Geneva Office of Taipei Cultural and Economic Delegation, known as a substitute for an embassy of Taiwan in countries without formal diplomatic relations, as well as in my email correspondences and long-distance phone calls with Taiwanese authorities. As I was told, my situation is quite special in that I am a Hong Kong resident but living and working in a foreign region, so they needed some time to process my application. After weeks and months, regrettably, I still could not find a way to enter the territory. Having said that, I fully understand the severe situation that the world and the country are facing, and the border control is certainly justified on the grounds of protecting the public health of the population. I am also not the only one whose research is affected by the global pandemic, and it is necessary to innovate our research methodology to tackle this challenge. But the intensified complexities of identity, border, territory, and mobility during the pandemic frame a meaningful case in legal geography. This experience of encountering the bordering, I realised, is a territorial effect of global political geography, which also explains why Taiwan must take very strict measures to close and control its borders to contain the pandemic.

Taiwan, a country in East Asia officially named the Republic of China (ROC), started to implement quarantine measures at the border control on 31 December 2019. These measures were targeted at flights from Wuhan in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and were brought in after the leak of hearsay to social media about the initial disease outbreak in Wuhan, mainly in Chinese language, which circulated among populations in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. An ophthalmologist in Wuhan, Wenliang Li, who was accused of leaking the classified pandemic situation and died in February 2020 after infection, was interrogated and given a warning by the police. This was long before the Chinese government admitted the disease outbreak to the global society, to which the virus was already uncontrollably and unanticipatedly diffused as people continued to move and travel. Although the Taiwanese government informed the World Health Organization (WHO) about the emerging pandemic in China before the end of 2019, WHO only replied that the message had been forwarded to experts. While Taiwan's success in combating the virus is self-proved now and won applause from many societies (Perng, 2020), it is still not respected by WHO. An illustrative scenario occurred during a Hong Kong reporter's online interview with Bruce Aylward of WHO in March 2020. When being asked about Taiwan's performance in containing the virus and the country's WHO membership, Aylward awkwardly avoided mentioning the name and the situation of Taiwan before the videotelephony session was suddenly terminated. Taiwan has long since applied for a seat at WHO. Taiwan's exclusion from WHO, in the then Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's words in June 2020, is "a geographical blank in the international response to public health" (Takemoto, 2020).

This geographical blank is a territorial consequence of geopolitics. Originally a founding member of the United Nations (UN), the ROC lost its international recognition

amidst the enduring Cold War order. After the Second World War and the civil war in China, while the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) remained in the territory and established the PRC, the Nationalist Party of China (known as Kuomintang; KMT) relocated the central government of the ROC and took over the effective governance of the territory of Taiwan from the hands of Japan. During the Cold War, it was the US strategy to befriend the PRC to weaken the power of the Soviet Union after the Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s. In 1971, the ROC was forced to give their seat at the UN to the PRC, while the US continued their commitment to the military alliance that assures ROC's national security, as long as the KMT promises to abandon physical force as a means to take back the territory of China. Since then, although Taiwan found itself one of the Asian Four Tigers during the rapid industrialisation of the Global East (Shin et al., 2020), it could not find itself any official capacities within the global governance hierarchy. Following its indigenisation, liberalisation, and democratisation, Taiwan has undergone tremendous transformation, but it is still excluded from the UN, WHO, and other intergovernmental organisations.

This explains why Taiwan had to control its borders strictly since the beginning of the pandemic. Being an island provides a favourable geographical condition for effective control of the borders. Otherwise, if the situation worsens, there is a risk that Taiwan would not be able to acquire any international support because it is officially excluded from the global governance network, even though its success, experience, and expertise in public health have offered much help to other countries in the commitment to global solidarity. Since January 2020, the Taiwanese government has activated the Central Epidemic Command Center, with the important mission of formulating and implementing border quarantine measures. In the beginning, Taiwan categorised incoming individuals based on their departure points; quarantine measures were implemented on those who flew from Wuhan and some specific provinces of China. As the pandemic worsened, Taiwan banned all individuals travelling from China, Hong Kong, and Macau from crossing the border in February, and all foreigners were banned in March. As the local situation in Taiwan remained clean and virus-free, the government gradually relaxed entry restrictions, starting in June. The Taiwanese government categorises all travellers into four identities only: foreign nationals, Hong Kong or Macau residents, Mainland Chinese, and Taiwan nationals. Foreign nationals could apply for entry permits for diplomatic and commercial reasons at the beginning, and the permitted reasons subsequently expanded to cover all purposes other than tourism and social visits. This was good news for foreign researchers who wanted to conduct fieldwork in Taiwan because international exchange was considered a permissible reason and it was indeed encouraged by the Taiwanese government. Nevertheless, all Hong Kong and Macau residents, and Mainland Chinese are still restricted. Apart from the pandemic factor, Taiwan's continued restriction on entry for people from Hong Kong might have arguably taken into consideration a potential influx of immigrants due to the unstable political situation in Hong Kong.

Whether individuals can travel across the borders depends on their identities. Identities are always spatio-legally contested and created. The creation of the specific identity categories relating to Hong Kong, Macau, and Mainland China is a result of the geopolitics. The territory of the ROC is legally defined. According to the Constitution of the ROC, the territory "according to its existing national boundaries shall not be altered except



by resolution of the National Assembly” (Article 4). In the Additional Articles of the Constitution enacted in 1991, the effectively governed territory (composed of Taiwan, Kimen, and Matsu Islands) is named the “Free Area.” But the constitutional territorial claim of the ROC includes the territory which is currently ruled by the CCP, including Hong Kong and Macau, which are referred to as the “Mainland Area” and “Hong Kong and Macau Area” in the law. There has been an official map cartographically representing the whole territory defined by the Constitution, although the Taiwanese government has not updated this map after the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was elected to take over the government presidency held by the KMT in the early 2000s. However, the Taiwanese government frequently updates another map that only includes the “Free Area.” It is a political reality that the current Taiwanese government could not and indeed is not motivated to govern the populations living in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau. But as the Constitution declares that the state has sovereignty over the whole defined territory, the Taiwanese government is still obliged to find ways to govern this territory and perform its sovereignty. One way to do this is through the law to create categories of space and people.

The identity and territory of Hong Kong in the law of Taiwan are contested. If the Constitution is strictly read, the citizens of Hong Kong, for example, are nationals of the ROC. The Taiwanese government established the “Laws and Regulations Regarding Hong Kong and Macao Affairs.” A category of “Hong Kong Residents” has been created because Taiwan Hong Kong citizens are not foreign nationals, but they do need an alternative form of entry visa in order to enter Taiwan. “Hong Kong Residents” refer to “persons who qualify for permanent residency in Hong Kong and who do not hold a travel document other than a British (Overseas) passport or a Hong Kong passport” (Article 4).<sup>3</sup> To understand this article requires a definition of what Hong Kong is. In a preceding article, the law adopts a definition with the colonial legacy that “Hong Kong” refers to “Hong Kong Island, the Kowloon Peninsula, the New Territories and parts ancillary thereto, as originally administered by the United Kingdom” (Article 2). The legislative history of this law can be traced back to 1997, the year when the sovereignty of Hong Kong was transferred from the United Kingdom to the PRC. The ontology of Hong Kong was a geopolitical question. Before it became a British colony, Hong Kong was a part of the territory of the Great Qing. The Great Qing was succeeded by the ROC which exercised sovereign power over the territory of what currently appears as China. Both the PRC and the ROC claim sovereignty over this territory, including Hong Kong. As the effective governance over Hong Kong is controlled by the PRC after the colonial period as it was determined during the Cold War era, the ROC could not do more than establishing such a legal categorisation and exercising the border control to perform its sovereignty.

#### **4. The nomosphere and uneven geography**

Border controls, concerned with access to territory, affect mobility in the more-than-human world. Undoubtedly, public health must be the concern that is prioritised during the pandemic. But it is also imperative to reflect upon why some specific groups of people such

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<sup>3</sup> For local political reasons, the National Assembly was abolished in 2005, as its powers are transferred to other institutions and Taiwanese people during democratisation. The power to alter the national territory is held by the Legislative Yuan and ultimately Taiwanese people via referendum.

as businesspersons are allowed to move or have their quarantine period shortened but not others, or why some countries adopt border controls targeting travellers from particular places but not others. In this essay, I consider these phenomena of uneven geography as the territorial consequences of the nomospheric dynamics that authorities want to regulate the pandemic world on the condition that the geopolitical order and economic activities should be maintained if possible, even only to a limited extent. Moreover, recent debates in early 2021 about establishing vaccine passport systems to reopen international travel also raise concerns regarding the uneven geography of vaccine availability and the ethical problem of necessitating being vaccinated a prerequisite for the mobility of our bodies.

Contemporary scholarship has already made many conceptual shifts that reorient our understanding of borders, territories, and mobility. But as the two nomospheric situations demonstrated, the ongoing global crisis gives real and strong evidence to those conceptual discussions, providing us with this unwelcome opportunity to experience geography, borders, and territoriality. While caring about people around us and remembering the loss of precious lives, we all want to bring an end to the pandemic, which draws our attention to how the world has been slowing down (Dorling, 2020) and calls into question the future of fast urbanism (Shin et al., 2020). In the future, rather than restoration back to the normal state, which was not too literally “normal,” there is a need to develop geographical imaginations of how we shall live with the new territorial reality.

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