

Emergent Globally Bordered Spaces: Anti-Terrorism, Global Finance, and so much more.

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New tightly bordered spaces that cut across traditional inter-state borders have multiplied in tandem with the reduced weight of the latter. This is the organizing hypothesis I explore in this lecture. Examples of these emergent transversal bordered spaces are the assemblage of infrastructures, organizational capabilities and new “laws” and norms enabling the strengthening of such worldwide systems as global finance, illegal trading networks, or the emerging global security regime (in the sense of anti-terrorism, not hunger, disease, corruption at the top of the system). The network connecting the circa 100 global cities in today’s world is another such example, though far more complex in that it includes both the networks of the powerful (e.g. global finance) and of the powerless struggling for social justice (e.g. anti-trafficking networks, but also the growth of global peddling networks that simply seek survival). There are more. In my research I explore this proliferation of transversal bordered spaces, including lesser known ones and those that emerge out of positive rationales – the International Criminal Court, particular global civil society projects such as fair trade networks, and so on. The existence of such new bordering capabilities qualifies, or even overrides, the common proposition that deregulating traditional borders entails a substantive shift to a “borderless world.” Such a lesser weight of borders may indeed hold for traditional inter-state borders. But if we disembed bordering from that traditional institutional setting, we make conceptual room for such new kinds of borderings. And we confront the question not only of the existence of such borderings, but also of the making of bordering capabilities it entails, capabilities once exclusive to national states. Seen through the lens of the conventions of the inter-state system are these to be only vaguely recognized, the equivalent of the terra nullius of an older era. From a traditional governance perspective such spaces could be considered ungoverned territories. I examine to what extent these spaces carved out of older jurisdictions might in fact generate novel forms of authority and rights.

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