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Material practices of power – part I: passports and passporting

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, passports are investigated as socio-technical artifacts with the capacity of interrogating the relation between design and politics. While they might appear as ‘trivial’ objects for some, passports tend to speak to the current political regime of mobility and more importantly immobility that produces refugee populations and undocumented migrants waiting in camps, transit zones or precarious clandestinity for several months and years. This inquiry in two parts aims to interrogate the artifacts of passport and its artifactual relations and practices – which I call passporting – in relation to the ways in which mobilities and immobilities are organized, controlled, regulated and shaped. Part I presents three interrelated ways of looking at passports: first, the historicity of passports and the ways in which technologies and material practices merge with the political, social and economic interests of specific times and spaces; second, the ways passports function and perform in a network of relations and ecologies which produce continuity as well as uncertainty with different effects, forms and scales in different environments; third, how passports and bodies change their positions constantly in the world in which the difficulties and uncertainties to locate either and/or become desirable space and time for manipulating and exercising power over undesired groups and individuals in local sites through a global rationale.

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Introduction

States in order to make affective their abstract notions of borders, nations, welfare, equality, citizenship, legal protection, rights and territory are in dire need of material articulations. In contrast, what is presented to us as sovereign law and order is seldom associated with material infrastructures. It is of importance, however, to speak of such material articulations as an act of designing. The articulations that states make, fabricate and design involve various levels and scales including artifacts, sites and spaces. One of the very specific artifacts of nation-state making, designed and fabricated in order to articulate the relation between a body, nationality and the state in the context of mobility and immobility is the passport.

The passport as it operates today is frequently defined as 'a little book issued by a national government that identifies its bearer as a citizen of that country with permission to travel abroad and return under the home nation's protection. When traced back historically and in relation to material articulations that states design and make, passports disclose various aspects of design as series of activities that participate in manipulation of the world regardless of their initial and intended functions. While passports often are taken for granted as products that facilitate states' security and policies, there are other layers to such a simple and thin booklet. Apparently less important than ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class and other socially constructed categories of power, passports become important when a non-privileged traveler without 'the right papers' crosses borders that her or his body is not known to or not supposed to be seen around those borders.

Passports are real and strong material devices of access, orienting bodies and their possibilities to move in one direction while immobilizing them in other directions. They mediate moments through which those socially constructed power categories can be enacted and performed. Ethnicity, gender and class come to interact and intersect and produce inequalities through passports and in various situations. This is evident in the lived experiences of the mobility and immobility of those non-privileged individuals and groups: in the past, Jews, Roma, wage laborers; today, refugees, asylum seekers and illegalized border crossers. Passports are material agents of exercising discrimination. They avoid abstract discussions of power and bring to the fore stories of power relations through their very materialities. Due to this, having regular discussions around topics of passports, visa and border crossing and recalling stories and memories around such issues through such 'marginal' artifacts are relatively common among the inhabitants of the countries with less 'valuable' passports, often non-white and non-western, compared to citizens of the Global North. Passports for many inhabitants of the world therefore are part of devising their lived experiences and of how they experience the world. To turn the passport into an object of thought then stems from non-white, non-privileged lived experiences.

As a part of my ongoing research on how design shapes and is shaped by politics through material practices and forms, I have been interrogating the material practices that produce and condition legalization of certain bodies – citizens – while illegalizing other bodies – undocumented migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and stateless people. In this paper I specifically focus on passports and their emergence as a political, economic and technical device. I discuss how their materiality, the environments that they have given shape to and the relations that they mediate between different bodies are intertwined with design as a form of material articulation. To think of designed things and design actions as material articulations is to understand design as a decision and direction embodied in all things humans bring into being. Design is conditioned by its orientations, directions and capacities, while at the same time conditioning human beings, things and the world. The designed and designing articulate possible conditions through materialities. Design here is understood as in the noun (the designed thing – passport) and the verb (designing and fabricating of passport) but also the second meaning of the verb (activities and practices flow from the designed passports and acts of designing passports). Consequently design in these three meanings is understood as a dynamic set of material articulations that are historically and politically concerned with what [the] action creates beyond what it instrumentally directed (Fry 2009).

To recognize design as material articulations is to understand it as a mode of acting in the world that does not merely articulate artifacts and relations, but also new environments in

which new regimes of practices, new understandings and possibilities of access, movement and inhabitations are produced (Keshavarz 2015). As much as these environments are socially constructed, they are materially sustained and reproduced. As much as they are real and pragmatic, they are fictional and illusionary. Rather than a product or a servant of border regime, a designed service provider, we, as design researchers, should think of passports and eventually passporting as regimes of practices that are products as well as producers of how design and politics interact, intersect and contradict.

Socio-materiality of passports in history

The idea of passports in the form of papers granting the right or enough means to pass can be traced back to the time when territories were defined and consequently the movements of individuals became subject to facilitation and prevention through identification. With various shapes, functions and productions of subjectivities that they promote, all identification papers share one common thread from the old times up to now: they are issued by a power institution either king, bishop, council, government, state and so on, which are supposed to provide access and protection through the practice of identification. This means that a king, a bishop, a government or a queen at power would certify that she or he knows and identifies the bearer of the paper – letter of conduct – thus asking for his or her protection and facilitation of his or her movement.

Up until the fifteenth century, papers, seals and wax panels were artifacts certifying and identifying individuals through description of their bodies in Europe. In this case, all these artifacts were devices of privilege, recognizing authorities and officials. It was a form of making the privileged unique and recognizable in a positive way. Thus it was a device of identity creation. The materiality of these devices in fact produced senses in the community and made some groups and individuals to be seen and heard more than others based on carrying a wax panel in their pockets. In the sixteenth century every traveler in Europe had to carry a passport in order to be identified and protected and further had to pay for such service since traveling was a privilege. While all these documents were describing a specific status of the privileged bearer as soldier, pilgrim or traveler, manifesting that he or she was separated from others and thus subject to specific protection outside the territory that he or she belonged to, two other social and ethnic groups became subject to such documents as well: beggars and Roma. The imposition of a general ban on begging came with an introduction of public support for beggars in sixteenth-century Europe, which produced a system of identification papers in order to categorize and classify them. New regulations enacted through material devices such as papers and badges therefore targeted the poor and underclass as well, namely those who were suspected of having contagious diseases, being engaged in vagabondage or illicit trading and so on. It is important to discuss the prevention of movement for such groups not only based on moral reasons or social fear but also economic exploitation. For instance, Robert Castel (2003) writes that the reason for banning begging and vagabondage was that they embodied escapes from feudalism and wage labor.

Beggars had to wear specific badges, visible to public and officials, which indicated that they were registered and under the reception of alms. Roma people also had to be registered and identified. Here, papers, documents and badges were not only a rational way of categorizing and making populations, but rather an exception that had been granted for

these individuals to remain in a certain territory in which any unlawful act would result in their expulsion.

The need for documents for the privileged wealthy travelers in order to travel safely, the imposition of registration of Roma and beggars and the enforced registration of migrants who had to be assessed to see if they were genuine Christians and not Jews, led to a system that developed an obsession with registering everyone and everything. From the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, authorities have showed lots of courage to carry out such obsession (Chamayou 2013). The desire of identifying any actor that can move or be moved derived from a rather complex set of motivations. These pertained to controlling people, animals and goods in order to regulate markets, and to anticipating and preventing social and political risks and avoiding 'racial and sexual threats.' In general this practice was about having power to keep under control and in order the things with the capability to move. It was not merely an act of disciplining criminals, one can say, but rather acting upon a realization that moveable actors can be dangerous.

The will to systematic registration in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries led to the production of piles of paper and stacks of information in the form of databases of individuals. If before, a letter of conduct from a king signed by his hand could give the possibility of passing to its bearer, now the new documents required new technologies. They had to be compared with something else. A new technique of control came to be functioning not only based on the presence of the bearer but also on his or her absence. The need to establish a place to record all data came to realization. Such needs were legitimized in the words of a French jurist in order to 'detect the wolves among the sheep.' A Spanish jurist proposed a similar plan of registration to monitor the population of their colonies in overseas dominions (Groebner 2007).

These socio-technological configurations changed the meaning of authenticity of the artifacts and their relations to the body. If the previous documents were authentic because the authentic hand of the king or bishop who signed the paper, the later generations were recognized as authentic if they were matched with the official registration databases and archives as well as if they were reproduced by one recognized state. In this sense, passports became an interface between recorded data and authorization agents. The design of the passport could no longer be a simple letter but a reproducible interface mediating a relation between data and the state.

The outbreak of World War I made passports even more useful for the regulation of the movement between territories. Like many other phenomena, World War I also gave birth to the modern passport regime that still exists today. It was during this time that many newly built governments according to the idea of nation or ethnicity in Europe established certain laws and decrees, often called Aliens Act, to track foreigners, spies and unknown travelers in order to possibly detain and deport them. The very strong bond between the passport and nationality, country or place of one's origin – which is in itself a modern term – is a product of combined developments in the late nineteenth century and the direct result of World War I (Groebner and Serlin 2006).

Passports were good devices for practices of tracking, detaining and deporting foreigners during the state of exception thanks to World War I. As a product of the British Nationality and Status Aliens Act 1914, passports were single sheets folded into eight held together with a cardboard cover. It was valid for two years and sometimes had an attached photograph. Photographs began to become part of the technology of passports but were still

not reliable enough. A look at application forms for passports from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the required information to be included in passports indicate that a detailed description of bodies needed to be documented since photos could not represent the bearer fully:

Age; Height; Forehead (high, ordinary, oval, slightly receding); Eyes (colours – blue, green, brown, including grey); Nose (large, straight, roman); Mouth (straight, firm, large, ordinary, medium, thick lips); Chin (round); Colour of Hair (Brown); Complexion (Fresh, pale, peachy, dark); Face (oval, thin).

(Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 1914, cited in Salter 2015, 25)

In the application forms of 1916, the photograph is given a space but is nonetheless corroborated by physical descriptions. Space for a photograph is complemented by narrative descriptions of the nose, face, complexion, brow, eyes, etc. (Salter 2015). With the rise of photography and easier techniques of reproducibility, the attachment of an individual's photo became gradually obligatory. During this time, Alphonse Bertillon, a French law enforcement officer and the expert on biometric identification, proposed the use of fingerprints in passports in order to overcome the longstanding gap between the representation of the person on paper and the actual body. However, the practice of taking fingerprints for issuing new passports was faced with resistance in France, since it was a form of 'dehumanization,' linked to documenting and indexing criminals (Groebner 2007, 237). Instead, photographing, which was not at all a practice related to the underclass society but rather a bourgeois tradition of photographic portraits, was embraced in the regime of modern passports.

It is important to state that the medium of photography that became a popular and standard technique for bridging the gap between the body, the identity and its representation in passports in the early twentieth century was first implemented and examined on marginal groups. For example, Eithne Luibhéid (2002) demonstrates how photography was first used for recognition of Chinese immigrant women in order to regulate their entry into the USA according to sexual politics. She argues that after the Page Law (Page Act of 1875), which was the first restrictive immigration law that prohibited the entry of immigrants to the USA from Asia who were considered 'undesirable,' Chinese women 'were actually the first immigrant group in the United States on whom passport like controls were tried out. In this respect, Chinese women's experiences both illuminated and facilitated key aspects of "modern" state formation in the United States' (2002, 52). She continues to argue that photography as a technique capable of officially recording the body's distinctiveness and using the record to control an individual's mobility, was first used on Chinese women before any other group of immigrants, because of the 'threat' of their sexuality to the United States.

What was introduced as a temporary contract or exception during World War I became permanent, standardized and institutionalized and formally entered into the international relations domain in 1920. That year, the League of Nations held a conference on passports, the 'Paris Conference on Passports & Customs Formalities and Through Tickets,' the result of which were passport guidelines and a general booklet design. The Conference was followed up by further conferences in 1926 and 1927 (League of Nations Archive 2002).

As a result of World War I and the rise of nation-states that were trying to constitute ethnically homogeneous states, movement across the world began to be more and more regulated. What became the norm after World War I in the form of the artifact of passports quickly gave shape to several restrictions on migration, which could be turned into legal practices more easily. With the process of the creation of states that identified themselves

with a particular conception of ethnicity and nationality, several groups failed to be recognized as 'state's people' and, in Hannah Arendt's view, were guaranteed and promised rights by an international body that was The League of Nations (Arendt 1973 [1966]). Because 'the nation had conquered the state' the meaning of citizenship and protection by the state became accessible only through recognition as nationals of that state. Thus, the rights of non-nationals could only be guaranteed by a supranational body that was the by-product of the process of the making of nation-states. As nation-states needed to identify who belonged to which particular nation, which each state is built around, passports and identification papers now had become necessary for every single traveler.

The League of Nations at first resisted the systematic rise of passport making, which was a result of World War I and a violent nation-state-building process that, in turn, left many without a nation stateless, producing a population called refugees. However, it gave up its opposition finally and had to find a solution to the so-called 'Russian refugee crisis' in early 1922. Since refugees, travelers without nation or stateless and immobile migrants failed to identify themselves according to the new national regime of recognition, the League decided to copy the practice of nation-states, and produced passports for non-nationals or refugees, thus identifying them as a new population. This product, called the 'Nansen Passport,' would allow stateless individuals to identify themselves according to the data recorded by the supranational body of the League of Nations. The product was a result of an agreement between 16 European states that could now issue traveling documents for Russian refugees without committing to giving any citizenship rights to their bearers. The states agreed to recognize these papers as valid but at the same time were not required to admit their bearers. By the end of the 1920s, more than 50 governments had joined the agreement and it was considered as a success. While the Nansen Passport was originally made and issued to give limited access rights to Russian refugees, it expanded its protection to Armenians, Assyrians and other stateless populations (Torpey 2000).

In fact, the issue of refugees in the aftermath of the Russian revolution was managed through the invention of a new category of passports, which is the origin of the Refugee Pass or *Laissez-Passer* of today. One can argue that what created refugees as a population was the invention of the nation-state but also the invention of passports as a way to recognize who belongs to which nation-state and who does not. The solution for management of refugees therefore was within the system that produced it, however practical and successful to some degree, it sustained the passport regime by producing various categories of passports, legitimizing the passport itself and shifting the question from the states and their practices of exclusion to practical matters of achieving the right papers according to the defined categories. In an analysis of modern refugee law it has been argued that: '[T]he beginning of international refugee law can properly be dated to the creation of the Nansen passport system' (Skran 1995, 105).

In October 1935, The Third Reich declared all German passports in possession of Jewish citizens invalid. It was only after their return to the hand of authorities and being stamped with a red 'J' sign that they became re-valid again. This was in addition to the special identity cards Jews were required to carry within Germany. Passports now entailed capacities of reinforcement of such restrictions as desired by both governmental actors and non-governmental ones at any moment. For example, passports made it easier for Germans to regulate and restrict migration both in Germany and other occupied lands around Europe during World War II. This does not mean that Germans would not have carried out their racial politics

without passports, however, such an artifact, which is inherently mobile, could be ordered to be always carried around as a property of government and not the individual, paving the way for Nazis to practice their ideologies materially everywhere and at any moment. A simple material setting then could lead to the arrest of many Jews and their deportations through such artifact. A body, a passport with a 'J' sign and a checkpoint with agents who control it could transform every corner of each street in Europe into a hostile environment for undesirable groups. Without passports, Nazis would have had to spend more time and money in order to track and arrest their target groups.

Today with new biometric passports, all the information that used to be written and described or added in passports is rather stored in a chipset embedded in the passport's cover and then locked by the issuing body. From the early 2000s on, more and more countries have started the production of biometric passports in which 10 fingerprints of its bearers are recorded in a chipset embedded in the cover of passports. Recently, more countries have included iris scans as another information system to be recorded and embedded in passports.

From the first days of the appearance of the passport as an obligatory attachment for any traveler, the problem of identification and authenticity was of concern. The introduction of photographs tried to bridge the gap between the body and the bearer of the papers. However, the poor quality of images and the weak techniques of attachments made it necessary for authorities to develop new technologies. The use of laser technology and shadow photographs in passports were introduced as new secure ways of identification. Failing to reach the gap between the body and the artifact again, biometric passports or e-passports were introduced in the early 2000s. The European Union forced all its members to issue e-passports that contain fingerprints, digital images and other data stored both in passports and databases categorized according to the legal status of individuals. In 2010, Frontex, the European Union's external border control agency commissioned a report to investigate the operational and technical security of e-passports. Their conclusion was that since e-passports have established a new regime of reading and analyzing data that is based on hashing algorithms, the need to establish smart gates to function as smart reading devices in European borders is anticipated. The design of smart gates, as stated by the report (Frontex 2010), is simple and easily scalable:

The [...] booth follows a straightforward design, where the traveler comes to a passport reader and when the passport is successfully read, the first door opens and passenger can be biometrically verified. When the traveler's face matches the photo in the passport, the second door opens and passenger can cross the border. The design is easily scalable and allows for an array of RAPID booths one next to another one. (41)

These booths, however, do not look like sci-fi devices or human-like robots. They look like any turnstiles many of us encounter every day when entering subway systems. The report adds that these booths right now and in their experimental phase serve only low-risk travelers in few selected airports and 'risky' travelers or those whose bodies, passports and databases could potentially mismatch need to be processed by human agents at the border. Smart gates in their current form and design aim to reduce the time a privileged citizen spends at border control.

In the use of such material practices situated in power relations, design travels easily from legitimized to ambiguous zones. Once the practice and deployment of designed devices and relations in one environment becomes acceptable and easy to use, the use of them in

other ambiguous environments presents it as familiar, trustworthy and 'user-friendly,' as the smart gates are described in the Frontex report (Frontex 2011).

A look into the use of biometric technologies that are now common in bordering practices due to the issuing of more e-passports shows that biometrics were first used and developed by credit card companies. This tells us how such technologies of power are not only a sovereign desire or instrument to control and regulate bodies over territories but also a market-driven interest that embraces every zone and individual notwithstanding their economies and class.

While old passports were filled with a detailed description of the bearer, of his or her name, sex, birthdate, father's name, height, weight, color skin, color of hair, distinguishing marks on face or body, shape of mouth, nose, facial hair, ears and so on, new passports have less of this descriptive information visible to the bearer. They rather carry a memory chipset that stores dozens of pieces of information. A passport today can tell agents at the border to which destination the passport has traveled, from what borders and at what time.

The ways in which I described how certain technologies and material practices enter into power relations affirm that artifacts and artifactual relations, their reproducibility in various scales as well as their material potency to be redesigned and re-appropriated in different environments, instances and moments produce certain effects over bodies and their movements.

Such understanding of artifactual relations as material practices of power will be followed up by particular readings of passports in relation to the ways in which they shape and are shaped by bodies and environments.

Political ecologies of passports

As the sketched history reminds us, passports are not isolated but come to function in a matrix of relations and in dialogue with other social and material practices. Passports, in order to be enacted and performed, have to be set in a series of relations and interactions. Such entanglement of the positions and orientations of passports in relation to other things and humans might produce unexpected results. Sven Opitz (2010) argues that today 'governmental technologies assemble scientific knowledge, technical apparatuses, anthropological assumptions, and architectural forms in strategic ways to configure relations of conduct. The implementation of illiberal governmental measures depends on material devices such as passports, databases, and checkpoints' (104).

Passports, while they articulate certain relations and positions, are part of an articulation. In fact, they are already within an articulation. In this regard, they have their own power beyond what they are to be perceived or designed for. This is what Bennett (2004) would call 'thing-power:'

The relevant point for thinking about thing-power is this: a material body always resides within some assemblage or other, and its thing-power is a function of that grouping. A thing has power by virtue of its operating in conjunction with other things. (353–354)

This can be called the political ecology of passports. And ecology here means of course that things are in a dynamic network of relations. In the global system of passports and visa control, being part of an assemblage or in my terms, articulations might produce an uncertainty that is often desired by power; a type of uncertainty that targets so-called minorities the most. One instance of such uncertainty is in fact a result of an algorithm produced

through interactions between identification software and data-readable machines. Gayatri Chakravorty (Spivak & Gunew, 1990), philosopher, gives an account of what happened to her while planning to go from London to Canada:

I was supposed to take the airplane from Heathrow on Sunday. Air Canada says to me: 'we can't accept you.' I said: 'why?' and she said: 'You need a visa to go to Canada.' I said: 'look here, I am the same person, the same passport...' Indian cultural identity right? But you become different. When it is from London, Indians can very well want to jump ship to Canada; I need a visa to travel from London to Canada on the same passport, but not from the United States. (65)

It is the articulation and congregation of machine-readable passports and airline information systems mapped into a route from London to Canada that caused prohibition for her. The same airline would permit the same Spivak with the same passport fly from the USA to Canada without any problem. This is how scattered items of data are articulated through a politics of probability in which judgments can be made by the suggestions offered by the security software. As Louise Amoore (2011) writes:

these judgments of the match analysts are made possible only by the algorithmic risk models already written by mathematicians, software designers and computer scientists. These practitioners 'work out the best set of rules' governing the links between otherwise scattered items of data. (64)

Amoore argues that today borders are performed within the global and data-driven systems in the associations made by combination of the state, commercial authorities, bodies, money, data and things who inhabit together in the border landscape.

Passports as one of such global and standardized systems thus are not the fixed and solid artifacts they might look like. They perform in articulations with other actors. These rules and codes of algorithmic models are not quite 'rule' but rather a situated performance of codes, passports, bodies, airports, airline companies and recent purchases done by credit cards of the traveler. They produce one risk effect in one day, at one airport and in one specific travel route, at one particular time and quite another in other instances (Amoore 2011).

Therefore passports enact politics in various ways through having 'scripts' (Latour 1992) embodied in them. These scripts can be seen and read for example from the position passports occupy in the ranking index of the mobility regime. Some passports ask to be checked more and others ask to be checked less. The script of passports, however, is always enacted in relation to other actors in the network and produces different realities and facts. This would help us to understand the script beyond the mere objectification of the social and political scheme in them. The politics of passports here can therefore be understood in 'its political potential [that] resides in its ability to induce a greater sense of interconnectedness between humanity and nonhumanity' (Bennett 2004, 367).

The made or physical inscriptions are different from performative and socio-technical ones. The 'socio-technical inscriptions' are those that are in between lines, spaces and times of physical inscriptions (Akrich 1992). An artifact such as the passport does not promote the explicit or physical inscription but rather fixes and demarcates its bearer through its socio-technical, implicit and internal inscription that is often invisible to individuals but visible to its makers. The designs of passports do not tell us anything about the rights to freedom of movement. They do not contain the list of countries that the bearers can enter without trouble. They are very abstract despite having almost 40 pages, detailed design and technology. The physical inscriptions of passports promise their transparency through bridging the gap between the bodies of bearers and their material actualizations through

biometric data, photos, names, barcode, numbers and so on. But indeed such never-ending bridging avoids the transparency of socio-technical or internal inscriptions.

Those who use passports often experience the moments of standing in front of a passport check desk where officers, after sweeping their passports into the computers' reading slots, or just by keeping them close enough to their radio-frequency identification (RFID) reader, gaze at the monitors' screens. They look dark to the traveler as if they were turned off but in fact they screen whole sets of information about the traveler's various exists and entries, their biometric data according to the last changes of laws, their recent purchases by credit card and the selected seats on airplane and so on. One example of such writing and articulations of codes, practices and behaviors run through algorithmic models thus may read:

If past travel to Pakistan and flight paid by a third party, then risk score of ***; if paid ticket in cash and this meal choice on this flight route, then secondary checks against ***; if two tickets paid on one credit card and seated not together, then specify this risk level. (Amoore 2011, 64)

Passports are designed in a way that subscribes only the physical inscription and in turn intentionally eludes internal and socio-technical inscriptions.

Another useful reading of the political ecology of passports can be found in the idea of abolition of passports within the EU for European citizens. It has often been introduced as a successful policy that can even be considered as one factor for the EU to receive the Noble Peace Prize in 2012. The abolition of the requirement of passports within the EU however is not an isolated successful policy. In order to pave the way for such regulation other actions needed to take place, somewhere else and in other environments. In doing so, attention was paid to the external borders of Europe. Fortress Europe, guarded by Frontex, is the other side of the abolition of passports in Europe. In order to develop one notion of freedom of movement, the EU needed to make passports and visa requirements stricter and more difficult to obtain on its shores. Peter Sloterdijk's work on 'spheres' (Sloterdijk 2011) makes a strong case of air as something that has been made 'explicit;' air has been reconfigured in a way that air itself is part of an 'air-conditioning system' that makes our life possible (Sloterdijk 2009). In line with his arguments, EU border politics can be seen as some sort of air-conditioning system, whereby the ventilation of one environment entails the pollution of another.

The EU and its policies toward the abolition of passports for its citizens should be seen as the privileged air-conditioned zones in which the pollutions of its sides and outsides are inevitable. Consequently, the prevention of movement from the so-called polluted environments to the clean-kept environments with the help of the artificial infrastructures – visa and passports regulations – then can be transferred to individuals and species inhabiting 'there.' The population that inhabits such polluted environments can be seen as a threat to the privileged zones and discourses of dust and dirt can be used and enacted discursively and practically. In *Purity and Danger* Mary Douglas (2013 [1966]), discussed how making distinctions between purity and impurity could be used as a mechanism for sustaining already made social structures. Undocumented migrants and refugees are seen as polluted and polluting (Malkki 1995) perhaps because they are the by-products of nation-building processes, citizenships' apparatuses and exclusive freedom of movements. It is important to note that it is the artificial infrastructures and material practices, for instance the system of passports, that produce social prescriptions such as fictional dichotomies of the pure and impure, the clean and polluted, rather than inscribing social structures into those artificial systems.

It is obvious that social structures and political ideologies can be injected into artificial systems and artifacts such as in the case of the New York parkways discussed by Langdon Winner (1980) or obvious spaces of confinement such as prisons, detention centers and asylums. However, this should not ignore the power relations embedded within the material things and practices from their very own positions, designs and specificities. Politics of passports instead should be recognized in relation to their environments, other environments and their abilities or capabilities to move, to be enacted and performed wherever they reside, which produces unexpected results and uncertainties.

The regional abolition of the passport system, while the idea of nation-state is the dominant way of organizing international relations and political realities, calls for another system. One product asks for another to be completed and cannot stand on its own. EU passports would be meaningless if the visa regulations for European countries would have remained the same as before. One artificial structure promotes other structures in which social and political fabrications are produced.

Political ecologies of passports tell us that passports always already perform and interact within a network of relations and practices. To put it simply, they articulate possibilities while themselves are part of the ongoing articulations in the world. This shows how design and politics co-shape each other. Consequently, understanding and intervening in situations would not be possible without simultaneous recognition of forms of design and forms of politics involved in any given situation.

Bodies as passports, passports as bodies

Passports regulate bodies. During passport controls at airports, bodies are often divided into two lines of individuals: citizens of the territory where the airport is situated and citizens of other territories. Passports regulate bodies in terms of granting access to certain bodies and not others or making the access harder, more time consuming or expensive for some and not others through the introduction of other supplementary systems such as visas, interviews at embassies, the need for applicants to prove a good financial situation and so on. In this sense, passports, visa regimes, stamps and border agents are at work in order to define the space and time of access. Tanya Titchkosky (2011) has observed that access should not be understood simply as a bureaucratic matter and procedure, but that it is about how spaces are experienced and lived as oriented toward bodies and their capacities and incapacities.

Passports therefore are part of a regulatory regime that identify some bodies as space shapers and some as 'space invaders' (Puwar 2003). That is why the US Department of Homeland Security, which was created in response to the 11 September 2001 attacks, sorts and regulates bodies in their databases in the form of low-risk and high-risk travelers in which the definitions of these two categories are subject to change over time.

Passports document, archive, process, read and write bodies in various spaces and time. It can be said that airports are very explicit sites of these practices. Today, at airports and in the moment of border crossing, that is the moment of encounter with human border agents, the actual bodies often disappear and passports become the main body. Now, our bodies and fingerprints, our retina patterns, faces and hand measurements are the attachments to the passports. It is often the passport's authenticity that is checked and compared to our body and not vice versa. In accounts of many travelers without the 'right' papers that I have

met, in moments of intended border crossing, the border guards are only concerned with the authenticity of the passport and not with its authentic relation to the represented body.

At the same time it is obvious that passports are created according to the bodies. Passports are the most produced circulating artifacts that carry biometric data, unique to each body. They are materialized in the form of chipsets embedded in the passports' back covers. However a paradox exists in relation to this. While passports are highly individualized and personalized documents, extremely codified papers according to the bodies and are unique evidence of the nationalities and therefore the right to be protected by the state – if one has one – they are instruments of knowledge that create populations beyond individual bodies as well.

While bodies are reduced to passports through identification techniques, passports become bodies in the moment of border crossing. It is through passports that individuals come to know themselves as international mobile–immobile or partially (im)mobile subjects and bodies (Salter 2006).

Passports, in Foucault's terms, are new 'technologies of power' that regulate bodies over their movement. These technologies of power that are different from disciplinary techniques of power, are means of regulation that started to spread in the early nineteenth century (Foucault 2003). If the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries witnessed a wide series of practices to produce docile bodies through disciplinary techniques, the nineteenth century was concerned with the production of bodies as population. This required something beyond disciplinary power, namely practices of regulation.

The population here is not at all a form of social body, but rather 'a new body, a multiple body, a body with so many heads that, while they might not be infinite in number, cannot necessarily be counted' (2003, 245). Populations are to be understood as dense networks of relations that governments attempt to regularize. Foucault argues that towards the early nineteenth century,

those who inhabited in a territory no longer were understood merely as judicial subjects nor as isolated individuals whose conduct was to be shaped and disciplined, but as existing within a dense field of relations between people and people, people and things, people and events. (Rose, O'Malley and Valverde 2006, 104)

Thinking with Foucault, one can understand passports as artifacts as well as material practices that help governments to control and manage the population. As Louise Amoore (2011, 64) by referring to Foucault (2007) argues, Foucault's depiction of security is oriented not to the disciplinary concern to 'let nothing escape,' but rather to 'open up and let things happen.' The 'space of security,' for Foucault, Amoore writes, poses a 'different sort of problem,' one that must 'allow circulations to take place, sifting the good and the bad, ensuring that things are always in movement.' In this sense, the practices of management need to take place in various places and spread out vertically and horizontally through different material articulations.

These material articulations in practice can be understood as 'conduct of conduct' (Foucault 2014) performing upon the will and acts of moving and migrating by all those actors capable of moving. From the perspective of governments, one technique of management, prediction and calculation would be the manipulation of the ways in which individuals might move. This needs to be material as well as designed in order to be effective. Conduct of conduct for regulation of movements is not about one single artifact, rule or practice. It needs careful and thoughtful articulation of relations between possible actions and conducts. It is about capacities that artifacts have in allowing or generating other actions beyond the

defined function and use inscribed by the act of design to them. It is about how one artifact can act on behalf of the other, one action on behalf of another actor and so on. It is about the second meaning of the verb design, that is designing actions and activities flowing from the designed artifact and actual acts of designing as discussed earlier in this paper.

Take, for instance, the example of the visa regime where those who cannot simply enter a territory with their passports need yet another authorization to be added to their booklets. This authorization comes from the third state. It leaves traces in the book and requires certain practices and systems outside airports and in embassies. The visa regime allows for a delocalization of the border function so that states may engage in sorting behavior away from the physical limit of the state (Bø 1998).

These inter-related and interactive material practices thus articulate an authority beyond its initial articulation. By visa, states can perform and interact outside the state territory. These material practices of application forms for visas, passports and residence permits take shape in the form of writing and reading practices. One common reference to writing practices in relation to bodies is tattooing, attaching badges and signs and archiving and documenting them in identification databases as a means of disciplining individuals as these were common practices in medieval Europe (Groebner 2007; Torpey 2000). Moreover, the tattooing of bodies in concentration and death camps was central to identification and population-making practices of totalitarian regimes.

Here, however I discuss other forms of writing and reading practices aligned with liberal discourses of current time. If the passport has become the main body with which populations are regulated, governments need new practices of writing that are less visibly invasive than the tattooing of bodies. Codified information about bodies and the history of their movements, their relations to other bodies and narratives are all written down and recorded in databases. As there is a materiality to coded environments (Löwgren and Stolterman 2004), reading practices always need databases in order to provide possibilities of comparison. They cannot be autonomous and always need other means and material articulations to be conducted. The need to conduct reading practices in a mobile way, since mobile individuals were concerned, created a need for a new medium that could engage the practice of writing and reading simultaneously. What medium would be better than papers in the form of books that, thanks to the growing publishing industry and today's current digital technologies, can be produced inexpensively on a large scale? Passports appear here in between the parallel practices of writing and reading individuals and populations. Passports give the possibility to their writers – the states – to read the bodies attached to them in the way they would like to. Here, new forms of knowledge appear; a whole new set of practices, skills, techniques and institutions to train writers and readers. Passports then affirm their capacities to carry and conduct such tasks.

Thus I argue that passports exist at the points where body and population meet and where writing and reading practices in intertwined realms of body and population are enacted. Therefore, it is a matter of discipline, but also a matter for regularizations. They can be applied to both body and population; they are 'power-knowledge.' It is there that already written and known data are used to theorize and read the unknown (Adey 2009) bodies. This is carried out through the establishment of rationalities and norms as procedures that are vital to airports as one functioning system within contemporary political economy of mobility.

While traveling to Sweden from Iran via Istanbul's Ataturk Airport, my partner, my friend and I were in line for the last passport check before boarding. This is carried out regularly

by airline staff to ensure that everyone who gets on board has the right passport or visa to enter the destination, in this case Sweden, which is a Schengen State. A black young man with a Swedish passport who was standing in front of us was asked to stand aside for a more proper check of his passport by an officer who would be an expert reader in order to compare the authenticity of the passport and the body of its bearer with the known data. When my partner protested against this practice and asked why they did not ask her to be checked properly once again by another officer, the airline staff without any particular expression or without even looking at her replied: 'It's a part of the normal procedure.'

He did not say that it was because she looked 'Swedish' and he did not or because she was visibly and knowingly white and he was black, which is unknown to the international subject of Swedishness. He rather believed that such commands shooting toward certain bodies were merely part of a normal process in each airport. The rationalization that took place there in that moment and in an encounter with a momentary protest revealed and affirmed how passports contribute to the establishment of rationalities that can easily be practiced and normalized and never be seen as a form of 'State racism' (Foucault 2003).

Being engaged in writing and reading practices organized by governments, passports escape from top-down power forces and are set in a matrix of relations. Passports set a series of relations between their bearers and their national state, between the bearers and the third state and finally between the bearers and other individuals and actors. Passports function in terms of bodies as long as they are located in such matrix of power relations. For instance, non-state actors can use passports in order to impose a will against one's own will. Such is the case with migrant workers, when employers commonly confiscate their passports in order to guarantee a long-term exploitation (Berggren et al. 2007).

Passporting: politics of material articulations

As I have argued so far, passports function in their pluralities. Pluralities of passports are not the types and kinds of different booklets published by different governments, rather the environments they produce over time and in their intersections and interaction with other socio-material entities and associations. Passports cannot fail to participate in the environments in which they are produced by and the environments that they themselves produce. Such embodiment, therefore, shows passports as central devices in a regime of practices that produce inequalities through intersecting and interacting with gender, race, class but also technologies, devices and designs. These associations produce practices that are local due to their materialities yet promote global rationalities due to their commercial benefits and circulations of norms and consequently their capacities of scalability. Rather than single objects, institutions or ideologies they are regimes of practices. To make inquiries about them is to grasp the conditions which make the objects, ideologies or institutions acceptable and normalized at a given moment (Foucault 1991, 75). So far I have tried to show how these practices as a set of regimes, intertwined and entangled with techniques and technologies, produce other sets of practices, environments, rationalities and normalcy. I call these regimes of practices, passporting.

What I call passporting is indeed a complex space of relations including various sites and artifacts aiming at regulating and legalizing the movement of certain bodies and consequently illegalizing others. Passporting consists of material practices that produce a regime of senses in which they define what is audible and discursive, what is visible and invisible

and so on. The sensory aspect of passporting thus defines how various actors including human and non-human bodies can take part in the regime to be visible or rendered invisible. This shapes a regime of participation in which some actors will be seen, defined and recognized as consensual participants and others as conflictual, some will be rendered as passive and some as willful or problematic. By calling the practices that have shaped passports historically and materially passporting, I imply a theorization of how devices, artifact and design condition not only our ways of inhabiting and moving in the world but also how we may perceive and understand possible ways of moving. This has consequence for how we, as design researchers and designers, might come to understand design ontologically and perhaps how we will re-direct our capacities in the shape we give to the world, its politics and its possibilities. By reading passports beyond a product of state security, we gain new possibilities on understanding the relation between design and politics.

If passports operate through political ecologies and produce and regulate bodies, they do so because of the capacities their design offers. I argue that passports as interfaces of the state, nationality and body, interact constantly between actively generating data banks, their reading and writing agents and their acceptability and normality. Passports like any other products are articulations of techniques and technological components. Their design in truth is an articulation of these technical components through material forms. These material forms are not separated from the environments they operate and move through and from the relations, conducts and practices. This is why I argue that the design of passports is not a mere act of designing, but articulating a series of relations which legalize certain bodies while illegalizing other bodies. In this sense, it is the articulation, their design, which persuades users and the state that passports are given, neutral or merely a product. Design in its practices of giving form to materials, in truth articulates materialities of the world in which the possibilities of moving, residing and accessing the world become designed, fabricated and authorized. Consequently they shape power relations and orient such relations to certain directions given economic, political and historical tendencies. Thus, material articulations while deriving from certain forms of politics, also form specific politics of movement, inhabitation and emplacement.

Material articulations are always in interaction with each other in order to divide, partition, process and maintain certain space and time which orient bodies and things toward one direction and not another. A political understanding of material articulations requires an understanding of power as a field of interaction. Foucault (2007) believes that in order to criticize power, one does not need to think of power as the domination of a mastery or explanation, but rather to see it as it is played out in the field of interactions,

contemplated in a relationship which cannot be disassociated from forms of knowledge. One always has to think about it in such a way as to see how it is associated with a domain of possibility and consequently, of reversibility, of possible reversal. (Foucault 2007, 66)

To think of power as artifactual relations and material articulations involved in ongoing interactions make us able to critically read the politics and practices of such interactions but also to point out possibilities of revisiting and reversing these practices.

In the next part of this paper, I will elaborate my theorization of passporting by giving stories and accounts of illegalized border crossers. Passporting will be discussed in terms of the materialities that they produce, the sensibilities that they generate, the participation that they promote and the translating that they do. These four lines of reading of the regime of passporting at the same time gives us the possibilities of recognizing those resisting bodies

and skills that historically have refused to be caught by such practices of power. I particularly will re-read the practices of forgery as a critical and momentary interruption in the regime of passporting in which it proposes a possible re-inhabitation of the material vulnerabilities of technical devices in order to re-articulate other regimes of senses, ways of participating, practices of translating and consequently other power relations.

In the core of forgery an act of negotiation occurs, a mode of technical reconfiguration of orientations and articulation of the right to move. If through material and performative practices that forgers are skillfully good at, the right to move can be granted beyond legal establishments like citizenships, then what has made a nation-state or sovereignty legal and transcendental is threatened. Forgers remind the sovereign power that its power is exercised and performed through material practices and thus it can be reversed with the very same technique. This is partly why forgery is considered as a security threat and has been presented as a matter of violence, of violating the law and the public good.

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