

## **Framing the Border: Securing Mobility and Representing the Nation**

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### **Abstract**

Airports are spaces where mobility is experienced in a number of ways. Often described as a non-place (Augé 1995) where anonymous individuals circulate, the airport also operates as a site of national security where all passengers must be identified. International airports in New Zealand, as gateways to an island nation, offer a compelling site for analysing the ways in which movement across the border is regulated. Media representations of passenger movement through Wellington International Airport and Auckland International Airport produce particular conceptions of citizenship and national identity. This paper will discuss how media discourses surrounding Wellington and Auckland airports position passengers in particular ways in relation to the nation, focusing on the representation of passenger movements which interpellate both New Zealand citizens and foreigners alike.

### **Airports, Borders and Governing Mobility**

Movement is at the centre of airport operations. For Gillian Fuller and Ross Harley, the airport is a 'machine for processing and controlling mobility' and, furthermore, representative of 'laboratory conditions' for thinking through processes and systems of global movement (2004, 38-43). Often cited as 'non-places' where people spend increasing amounts of time in transit, waiting, and shopping (Augé 1995), airports have become sites emblematic of late-capitalism, globalisation and free mobility. Yet, despite their transitory nature, airports are increasingly being viewed by scholars as products of specific socio-historical, cultural, economic, and geopolitical contexts. They have been described as distinctly urban spaces (Roseau 2012; Fuller and Harley 2004); celebrations of a culture of flight (Adey 2006); environments of authorities (Kellerman 2008), and spaces of governmentality (Salter 2007), to mention but a few. Each of these descriptions, while by no means mutually exclusive, highlight the ways in which airport

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space is organised according to different operations, principles, and practices that 'place' people in certain ways.

Central to this idea is the understanding that space is continually produced through ongoing social and spatial relations, as discussed by Henri Lefebvre (2000). For him, 'space considered in isolation is an empty abstraction' (2000, 12). Instead, space is inherently social and 'incorporates social actions' (Lefebvre 2000, 33). The relationship between representations of airports and their lived experiences produce the meanings and practices associated with airport space. New Zealand international airports are represented in a way that reinforces ideas of national identity, state power, and citizenship. In turn, these discourses work to mobilise travelling citizens in a regime of risk management, and reproduce the airport as a space of difference. Crucially, the airport is not just a port where aircraft land and depart, but a site of social rules and norms experienced both as part of the every-day routines of travel and through representations and discourses surrounding the airport.

Both Wellington and Auckland Airport's official websites, for example, speak to potential passengers in certain ways, producing airport space through a promotional discourse. Auckland's site suggests the airport aims to 'make your departure stress-free', where '[a]rrival procedures enable passengers to easily plan and go through airport safety and security processes, to allow for a smooth entry through the gateway to New Zealand'. Wellington's site similarly provides 'information to assist visitors and passengers use the airport with ease'. The words 'stress-free', 'ease', and 'smooth entry', represent positive experiences of mobility at these airports. Their spaces are produced through a discourse of the ultimate customer experience, where the 'stress' that can potentially accompany air travel is presented as easy to avoid for passengers familiar with airport operations.

While in these examples the airport has been promoted as a stress-free environment, this elides the fact that for many passengers, the airport is also a space of tension (Salter 2007) and anxiety (Adey 2008a). One of the emerging modes of inquiry within airport studies focuses on the airport as a uniquely political space in which spatial technologies of power underpin modes of governmentality. International airports encompass borders, which, beyond demarcating physical geographies, are spaces characterised by 'the human practices that constitute and represent differences in space' (Van Houtum 2005, 672). They are thus spaces through which people are differentiated in a number of ways. Mark Salter argues that international airports are responsible for two often conflicting motives: allowing free mobility while at the same time ensuring maximum security (2007, 50). They operate through 'authority generated flows' that channel people through different jurisdictions at the level of the international, national and local (Kellerman 2008, 164). Passengers thus become entangled in the intersecting operations of airports, where the politics of citizenship, airport commerce and national security intertwine to produce particular and often very different experiences for citizens, foreigners, refugees and so on. While Wellington and Auckland airports may

solicit the relaxed passenger, by the nature of the airport, every individual is subject to some form of scrutiny. For example, Kellerman notes that when police stop people on the street and ask for identification, it implies a form of suspicion; however, in the airport, passengers are stopped at multiple points to be identified (2008, 174). Within this logic, every individual becomes suspicious until proven innocent, a mode of operation that has only increased in most airports after the events of 9/11. Fuller and Harley argue that the tactics of securitisation at the airport are made possible by a logic of exceptionality, where as part of the need to move, people submit to invasive identification procedures which become 'rationalised through a discourse of exception – only "at the airport"' (2004, 44).

The airport thus becomes a distinctively political space, discussed by Salter as an instance of Giorgio Agamben's (2005) 'state of exception'. For Agamben, the sovereign power can make unquestionable decisions regarding the rights of its citizens, premised on the right to declare a state of emergency that suspends the operation of the normal law. The sovereign decides whether or not the law applies to a certain situation, or whether it can be overridden by political fact. Of concern to Agamben are the lives that become caught up in this state of exception, who are excluded from their normal rights by the sovereign. In Salter's words, they become 'subject to the [temporary] law but not subjects in the law' (2008, 367). This 'bare life', as Agamben names it, is treated as an 'absolute biological substance' beyond subject positions such as culture, race, gender, class, ability and so on (1999, 85). Stripped of any identity that may politicise it, this bare life becomes a purely biological body subject to the sovereign's overriding power of governance (Agamben 1998).

Furthermore, Foucault (1984) argues that this sovereign power to abandon life from the law has been reconstituted to act through the administration of life, where the State takes into its care the vital biological processes of the population. Here, political power takes biological life as its object of management and control, for example, measuring the ratio of births to deaths, the rate of reproduction and fertility in order to optimise a population. As a result, a form of 'biopolitical life' emerges, through which life is submitted to these technologies of power as part of its conditions of existence (Mills 2008, 1). For Agamben, however, these modes of power are not mutually exclusive. He claims that the 'state of exception' that produces bare life is increasingly becoming the rule, or the 'dominant paradigm of government' (Agamben 2004, 2). In this case, State power acts directly upon the bare, biological life as its normal mode of governmentality, bringing bare life from the periphery to the centre of its attention. For Agamben, then, the 'original' exercise of sovereign power is the production of the biopolitical body (1998, 6).

For Fuller and Harley, the airport as an exceptional zone thus demonstrates Agamben's argument. Here, the state of emergency upon which the sovereign decision is premised is the security of mobility, in which decisions to securitise national space can override a person's normal rights while they are in the airport. According to Salter, as the mobile

body is stopped, examined, and identified by airport security, all passengers enter into a 'space of indistinction in which citizens, foreigners, exiles, refugees and asylum seekers are all held in an extra-political nowhere while the sovereign makes a decision' (2008, 370). Within this logic, while the passenger is considered, they are temporarily classified as a potentially alien body that could be a threat to security so that 'the border is a permanent state of exception' (Salter 2008, 365). Political power acts directly on the biological body as part of securitising the border so that 'bare life' is continually produced. While airports play the vital role of facilitating mobility across borders, as Salter suggests, they have the 'inverse effect of rendering mobility entirely problematic, shattering notions of sovereign space, and complicating the stable identities upon which the nation rests' (2007, 63). According to Salter, the politics of mobility in the airport are thus largely tied up with the idea of the nation-state and who is included in this territory. Airport space, while promoted as a stress-free space for the passenger-customer to relax, is simultaneously a political holding zone where everyone must be granted permission to move. However, as will become apparent over the course of this paper, some individuals are more subject to scrutiny than others, problematising Salter's contention that the mechanisms of airport security create a 'zone of indistinction' for all passengers alike.

### **Representing the Biopolitical Border**

*Border Patrol*, a New Zealand reality television series focusing on border security as governed by customs, Immigration New Zealand (INZ) and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), uses this logic of exceptionality – of treating each and every mobile body as a potential threat – as its framing device. In contrast with the representations of passenger mobility offered on Auckland's and Wellington's airport websites, *Border Patrol* represents the airport experience as rigidly policed and highly tense, far from a smooth and relaxed flow through the terminal. Peter Hughes (2010) writes on *Border Security: Australia's Frontline*, particularly as a docu-soap style which works to entertain rather than inform or analyse, and how this functions as a form of positive public relations for border operations and larger government agencies. While perhaps performing a similar function for the public relations of New Zealand's border operations, what is of importance here is how *Border Patrol* portrays the different ways in which people are processed through the country's airports. Auckland International Airport and Queenstown International Airport are the primary settings, providing in depth insights into the ways mobility is governed upon entry to the country. The opening credits for Season 7, a voiceover states:

New Zealand's air, sea and land borders are persistently under attack. Drugs, prohibited goods, pest organisms and animal diseases are among the unwanted and the unwelcome that could destroy our economy and our whole way of life. Standing in their way are our defenders: the men and women of customs and the Ministry of Primary Industries. Crucial lines of defence... New Zealand's Border Patrol.

Described as 'persistently under attack', the border is framed as existing in a state of emergency under the threat of external forces, requiring constant defence. While in a post-9/11 aeromobile environment terrorism is seen as a pervasive risk, the opening credits suggest *Border Patrol* is primarily concerned with biosecurity, and the effect drugs, pest organisms and animal diseases may have on New Zealand life, constituting its own geographically and politically specific state of emergency. The typical episode structure follows intercut stories of passengers under suspicion of 'border violations' at both Auckland and Queenstown Airports. Hughes argues that *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* 'discursively constructs situations and individuals as "risky"' (2010, 444). This is also true for *Border Patrol* New Zealand, where every passenger featured is, through the nature of the show, under suspicion as they are subject to points of examination by authorities that determine whether or not they are able to pass through. While the series emphasises the ecological dangers of biosecurity risks, these risks are always attached to bodies, producing the airport as a space where passengers must be policed. However, this framing of all passengers as suspicious obscures the fact that some passengers have already been deemed as risky before they even enter the airport.

*Border Patrol* focuses on the passenger's journey through the terminal itself, using security techniques like behaviour profiling to frame some individuals as riskier than others. Peter Adey (2009) has examined practices of behaviour profiling strategies in airports, suggesting that while security checks primarily rely on identification of individuals – whether it is biometric processing such as facial or iris recognition technology or a customs officer matching a passport with the corporeality of the body presented – airport security personnel are additionally systematically reading the gestures, expressions, and micro-movements of the body in order to uncover hostile intentions (277-280). For example, rapid eye movement, perspiration, or agitation could indicate a passenger has hostile intentions, from concealing a restricted item across the border to engaging in unwarranted activity. This form of behavioural profiling pre-empts particular scenarios under a regime of risk management, by detecting the often subconscious displays of emotions, feelings, fears and anxieties by the body. Adey argues that while behavioural profiling highlights particular bodies by separating the high risk from the low risk, it does not individualise (2009, 284). Rather, this form of risk management via profiling is a part of both regulating and optimising the whole of a population; it is, in Foucault's (2003) words, a form of 'massifying' that is 'not directed at man-as-body but man-as-species' (243). According to Adey, these strategies of profiling do not focus on socialised displays of emotion, but rather biological displays, which 'supersede the racial and the cultural' and are 'genetic to all humans' (2009, 285). Here, behaviour profiling can be seen as a biopolitical technique of governing airport space, in that political power acts directly upon the site of the body as a form of pre-emptive risk management. Hughes suggests that the customs officers in *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* are 'presented as experts in knowledges required for national security' (2010, 447). In *Border Patrol*, this knowledge is of the body, its biological responses, and how these may indicate potential risks within the airport.

*Border Patrol* represents this mode of behaviour profiling as crucial to the work customs officials do to protect the border. For example, over an establishing shot at Auckland International Airport in '50k Meth Man' (Season 7 Episode 2), the narrator states 'Customs staff ... have a knack for spotting the dodgy, the dangerous and the daft.' This, to begin with, places an emphasis on observing behaviour and detecting abnormalities. In the same episode, a Singaporean national, who has captured the attention of customs officials as he has come to New Zealand via Australia for only two days, is observed over CCTV to be fidgeting, looking around frequently and moving his hands. This observation warrants a baggage search, through which a large amount of concealed methamphetamine is discovered. Similarly, in 'Deported Tour Guide' (Series 7 Episode 4), cash-detector dog Roxy indicates a tour group from Shanghai may be carrying over the restricted amount of cash into the country. However, customs focus on one individual in particular, the tour leader, who, as the narrator observes, 'is keeping unusually quiet' and 'displaying unusual body language'. After some members of his tour are confirmed to be breaching the cash restriction, the guide is taken to the search room where customs discover a large amount of tobacco strapped to his body – well over the limit allowed to be brought into the country. Again, in 'Forgotten MDMA Pills' (Season 7 Episode 7), featuring a Bahraini national found with the psychoactive, recreational drug MDMA in his luggage, the narrator sets up the story by asking the audience: 'does a secret smile lead to a secret stash?' In each of these scenarios, systematic observation of passenger behaviour is framed as playing a vital role in detecting and eliminating risks. *Border Patrol* prioritises a focus on the passenger whose movements may essentially disclose guilt. Within this logic, all bodies become subject to the scrutiny of power as enacted by airport security, aligning with a biopolitical regime of governmentality.

### **Interpellating the New Zealander**

In examining the television series as a whole, particularly with a focus on Season 6 and 7, a pattern emerges that suggests a more complex politics of representation, problematising the notion that all passengers are subject to equal biopolitical processing. While according to Adey, behavioural profiling at the airport focuses on purely biological indicators of particular behaviours, the metanarratives in *Border Patrol* – despite utilising these indicators as strategies of detection – seem to prioritise particular passengers as risky. For example, New Zealand citizens are generally framed as less of a risk than people of other nationalities. '50k Meth Man', featuring the Singaporean national bringing methamphetamine into New Zealand, for instance, ends with customs officers awaiting the arrival of police to detain him. The audience discover that he has been prosecuted for a similar offence in Singapore, a voiceover stating: 'You would have thought after ten years locked up in a Singaporean prison, the man would have learnt his lesson ... This man's life is in a state of ruin and he is in serious trouble.' Such language suggests the Singaporean national has transgressed a moral code and he is framed as inherently guilty. 'Deported Tour Guide', featuring the tour guide from

Shanghai smuggling tobacco on his body, uses similar language: for example, the narrator states '[the tour guide] hasn't told customs the full story' and '[the Customs officer] is sure he [the tour guide] has something to hide'. The story ends with the tour guide's visa revoked, a fee issued and a ban on entry to New Zealand for twelve months. Again, the tour guide is framed as dishonest and intentionally breaking the rules.

Comparatively, 'Perfume Eu Tonga' (Season 7 Episode 3) features a New Zealander stopped by customs due to a display of framed butterflies he has brought in from the Philippines. MPI staff must determine if any of these butterflies are endangered before the man can pass through. After discovering some of the species are endangered, the narrator claims the man 'innocently brought a collection of butterflies in ... It's all a shock for this straight-shooting kiwi who did everything by the book, buying from a supposedly legitimate Manila shop and declaring the collection to MPI'. After some of the collection is confiscated, the New Zealand man states: 'If we don't protect these things, then ultimately there'll be none left to protect ... It needed to be done'. Here, the language used frames the man as apologetic, compliant and understanding of the rules that he unintentionally broke. Similarly, in 'Argie Bargie' (Season 6 Episode 3) a New Zealand pair, comprised of a veterinarian and a scientist returning from a work trip transferring embryos on livestock, are pulled up for examination by MPI due to the equipment they have brought back, including a microscope and an embryo freezing machine. The customs officer labels them as high-risk people as they visit many farms in different countries (meaning they could transmit bacteria or disease). However, they are found to be following all rules and are commended by the narrator as 'vigilant passengers'. The customs officer also states: 'I wish we had all passengers like that, that would be good', before thanking the pair for their cooperation.

While in these instances, all passengers appear to be subject to the same mechanisms of airport security, the ways in which their stories are framed rely on their socio-political position in relation to the nation. This sets up some passengers as more eligible to enter the country than others. The small number of New Zealanders under examination are usually pulled up for minor breaches of border security, through which they are proven 'innocent', while foreigners appear to be the passengers that are featured as breaching border regulations most severely, in turn framed as guilty. This representation of passenger experience suggests *Border Patrol* uses discourses of national identity to interpellate viewers as potential passengers. The language used at the point of examination, including 'declaring', 'confessing to contraband' and 'honesty' produce these security points as a moral test, which the New Zealander always seems to pass while the foreign traveller is the one who fails. Moreover, the inclusion of terms such as 'argy bargy' – a playful yet hyper-masculine rugby term – along with 'straight-shooting kiwi', potentially a derivative of the 'kiwi bloke', suggest the show may interpellate New Zealanders through the recognition of particular 'kiwi-isms.'

The broadcast of this show to a New Zealand audience on TVNZ, New Zealand's national television broadcaster, along with on-demand access on their website, further indicates

that the show works to speak to a national audience through these references, and uses these representations of appropriate and inappropriate passengers as a form of preparation for if the viewer is to travel through the airport. Sarina Pearson (2016) has written on the function of ecological themes in New Zealand reality television, suggesting that 'securitainment' shows that focus on the dramatics of environmental security, a term coined by Mark Andrejevic (2011), are part of a wider shift towards 'edutainment' shows that both educate and entertain in the place of previously popular current affairs programmes. These shows, as she suggests, signal a response to a neoliberal risk society where viewers learn to assume personal responsibility for the risks depicted on screen (Pearson 2016, 124). As demonstrated in *Border Patrol*, the discourses of ecological preservation, fear of contamination, and citizenship are reproduced over a serial format through which expectations of how to behave in the face of these risks are communicated.

Adey claims in his work on behavioural profiling,

Foucault later argues that biopower is concerned with much more than just lives and the 'living' of the population, but, rather, that its people should be 'doing a bit better than just living'. And that this 'doing a bit better' can be converted into the forces of the state. (2009, 279)

Similarly, Hughes argues that the way *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* paints the mechanisms of security as normal and necessary 'mobilizes the travelling citizen in the maintenance of secure borders' (2010, 440). Evident from the opening credits, *Border Patrol* interpellates the New Zealander in protecting an image of 'our whole way of life', so that the security techniques and metanarratives used work as broader form of biopower. Recognising themselves in the representation of the honest, considerate passenger, New Zealand citizens are configured as self-managing, responsible users of the airport.

Moreover, the metanarratives within *Border Patrol* privilege not only the New Zealand citizen within these scenarios, but a particular conception of the New Zealand citizen. The butterfly collector is a white male while the veterinarians are both framed as productive employees of the State, qualities which reproduce a settler capitalist notion of citizenship that prioritises white bodies in 'acceptable' employment. These conceptions of New Zealand citizens, passengers and foreigners as well as how borders should be maintained are thus Euro-centric and serve particular power hierarchies. While this argument does not mean to suggest that Greenstone TV, *Border Patrol's* production company, works resolutely as an agent of the colonial settler state, the discourses produced by the show certainly reinforce dominant values that, in fact, rationalise this state power. This form of biopower that seeks to optimise the traveling population therefore does so in a way that, as Holly Randell-Moon (2016) argues of citizenship under white settler sovereignty, 'affirms the "virtue" and legitimacy of the settler colonial state' (44).



Although international airports indeed capture all passengers in a generalised security environment and exercise exceptional rights to include or exclude individuals from national territories, the metanarratives in *Border Patrol*, while emphasising the total capture of passengers in airport security techniques, end up emphasising difference in the biopolitical spaces they present. The discourse of travel presented on the official airport websites framing the passenger experience as relaxed, organised, and stress-free initially appeared to come into conflict with the tense passenger experience of examination and confession in *Border Patrol*, yet the largely domestic audience of both of these texts suggest they may work together to organise and optimise the New Zealand passenger population, as both customers and citizens.

### **Representing the Safe Passenger: Frequent Flyers and SmartGate Users**

*Border Patrol* is one of many examples that discursively produces some airport users as safe and others as threatening. News stories following events at border security are useful in further exploring the representations of mobility for different subject groups. Examined in relation to security practices employed at Auckland and Wellington airports, these representations carve out an image of airport space as a site where definitions of national identity and conceptions of citizenship become problematised in a similar way to *Border Patrol*. Such representations reveal a 'politics of difference' inherent in the ways in which mobilities are regulated within airports, an idea that has already received a fair amount of attention. David Lyon (2007), for example, focuses on the forms of 'social sorting' at the border that separate high-risk passengers from the low-risk; Dean Wilson and Leanne Weber (2008) write on the Australian border as discursively produced through inclusion and exclusion of certain social groups, and Adey (2008b) emphasises the subjective experiences of opt-in frequent flyer programmes that enable 'trusted' passengers to bypass security checks. These systems share a common goal of minimising risk by targeting passengers who present themselves as less eligible to enter the country than others.

Following the events of 9/11, airports have become increasingly concerned with mechanisms to minimise the risk posed by opportunities for global travel. Risk profiles are constructed using a compilation of information about suspect populations and then applied to individuals crossing the border by border control, so that certain categories of traveller who conform to set criteria can be 'pre-emptively immobilized' if they become considered a risk to national security (Wilson and Weber 2008, 127). One such example discussed by Wilson and Weber is the computerised information network called Advance Passenger Processing (APP), which uses information technologies and comprehensive surveillance to enable passenger-monitoring from the time an intending passenger applies for a visa or attempts to board a flight for Australia. Immigration New Zealand (INZ), who deal with incoming passengers to the country, operates using the same service, so that airlines involved in the intending passenger's travel are required to provide to INZ, as stated on their website, 'the APP information required by the [Immigration] Act [2009] and regulations, for anyone who intends to board an aircraft

to New Zealand' and to 'comply with INZ directives about allowing certain persons to board an aircraft or not'. This is combined with Advance Passenger Screening (APS) checks conducted when the passenger checks in to their flight to New Zealand, to ensure they possess the correct travel documents and a valid visa, if required. As Wilson and Weber argue, such pre-emptive risk management systems work by effectively pushing the border off-shore, so that it becomes both delocalised and discursively produced via the processes, systems, and checks required before an individual can approach the physical border (2008, 129). The international passenger entering New Zealand is subject to these mechanisms of control before they depart, meaning the airport that processes their arrival is already working to capture them in a system of risk management. Not only is the border delocalised; so is the airport's role in securing mobilities.

Furthermore, Dean Wilson (2006) argues that, because biometric technologies perform automated functions of verification and identification, such technologies have been framed as neutral, eliminating the possibility of discriminatory enforcement (91). However, systems are often imbued with strong political motives (for example, fighting the 'War on Terror') that emphasise differences in passengers. Political power is inscribed directly at the site of the body, through its inclusion or exclusion, as a citizen or a non-citizen. These technologies of security, as Adey (2008b) suggests, can subsequently produce the very personal experience of being deemed suspicious, disallowed entry into a country or being questioned.

According to the INZ website, the APP system works to 'enhance the security of New Zealand's borders and minimise disruption for genuine travellers', introducing the inverse of detecting 'high-risk' passengers, which involves minimising the security efforts required for 'low-risk' passengers. Adey uses the example of opt-in trusted or registered traveller schemes that are meant to 'produce a faster, more comfortable, and speedier service for those who are deemed to be less of a risk than others' (2008b, 154). Within these schemes, passengers are encouraged to prove that they are less risky than others and do not require further examination, often by voluntarily submitting extra information or paying a fee. Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport, for example, uses a biometric system to accelerate the mobility of trusted travellers. 'Privium' is a technology that scans the passenger's iris and matches the result with an electronic image of the eye, securing identity without the passenger needing to show their passport. Another such system, operating at both Auckland's and Wellington's International airports, is SmartGate, an automated biometric identification system. SmartGate allows passengers holding a New Zealand, Australian, UK, US or Canadian ePassport (a passport which carries a microchip containing an electronic version of the passenger's facial image, along with their personal details) to check themselves through Passport Control, via a gate which takes an image of the passenger's face to match against the digital image in their passport. Also discussed by Weber and Wilson and in use at a number of Australian airports, SmartGate facilitates the rapid-processing of 'low-risk' passengers, allowing customs officers to focus on 'high-risk' passengers

(2008, 134).

These systems are essentially designed to differentiate between groups of passengers, thereby affecting their path through the airport. As Adey suggests, they reveal 'how different people may experience differential passage and treatment throughout the space' and, in turn, produce certain narratives surrounding those who can use these systems (2008b, 154). The New Zealand Customs website, for example, encourages people to 'Breeze through Passport Control' by using SmartGate. In December 2015, New Zealand's Minister of Customs Nicky Wagner claimed in an article on *Stuff* that the new gates 'ensure legitimate travellers can enjoy faster border processing and officers can focus more on the high-risk travellers' in a way that is 'quicker and easier for passengers'. Here, the language emphasises both the speed of the moving traveller and the legitimacy of their movement, suggesting that those who cannot use SmartGate should be slowed down or are, in some way, illegitimate. Adey quotes Crispin Thurman and Adam Jaworski in saying 'there can be no "special", "exclusive", "advantaged" or "privileged" unless one is [made] conscious of the common, the ordinary, the needy, the dispossessed' (2008b, 154), which indeed becomes true for these representations of SmartGate. While a faster, more efficient route through New Zealand's airports is offered for those who qualify, those excluded from the system are labelled in default as potentially risky. Ability and class, for example, are inscribed into security and risk assessment systems such as SmartGate so that differently-abled bodies passing through these systems or persons who cannot afford to pay the fee for some opt-in schemes are in default labelled as suspect. These systems normalise particular forms of movement, thereby reproducing ideas about who is safe and who is not.

### **Questioning Citizenship**

Systems like SmartGate require the holder to have a passport from a participating country, in turn labelling those without an accepted passport as more of a risk. While this may suggest New Zealanders returning from travel overseas are more likely to have a 'safe' arrival back into the country – a discourse supported by the privileging of New Zealand citizens as 'innocent' on *Border Patrol* – further examples from the news regarding the mobilities of New Zealanders in particular suggest otherwise, and indicate there are particular performances of New Zealand identity that are expected in the country's airports.

In an article for *Stuff* in June 2016, Yasmine Ryan writes about the emerging issue of what she calls 'homegrown terrorism', discussing the treatment of Muslim-New Zealanders by airport security. Two Tunisian-New Zealanders said they had each separately been stopped by customs. The first man was initially stopped at Auckland Airport where he was questioned for two hours after arriving home from a holiday he regularly took to visit family in Tunisia. According to the article, customs staff were 'fixated on the fact that he was born in Saudi Arabia before his parents migrated to New Zealand', also looking through files on his computer and phone. A second man was

stopped on two separate occasions in 2015 also returning from a holiday in Tunisia, who is quoted saying, 'it's a very humiliating process. And it feels as if we are treated as guilty until proven innocent'. Ryan writes,

On each occasion, [the men] were questioned extensively about where they had travelled, why they went, and who paid for their travel. The men recently requested the files on the interrogations by customs, under the Official Information Act. The section on why they were selected for questioning is blacked out, so they still don't know why they were questioned. (2016)

A few months later, the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (SIS) requested a meeting with the second man, of which the outcome was not stated in the article. The SIS denied selecting people based on their faith or ethnicity, a spokesperson instead claiming, 'We identify people of interest based on a number of factors, which could include something they say or some other behaviour' (Ryan 2016). While the reason for detection remains undisclosed in each of these news stories, the New Zealanders returning to their home country have at some point been identified as constituting a risk, requiring temporary holding and further examination. The official focus on behaviour which, in returning to Adey (2009), can identify risky passengers works to obscure how the politics of race, religion and culture may affect the selection process.

In both of the Tunisian-New Zealanders' cases, the passenger is differentiated in a way that makes their backgrounds appear threatening in the absence of any other explanation for why they have been detained, despite the SIS's denial of holding people due to these very determinants. Adey argues that airports 'actually work to *make* these differences by sorting passengers into different modalities' (2008b, 146 original emphasis), so that experiences of difference are manufactured by airport authorities for particular purposes (150). This indeed becomes true when examining these stories, in which, as Fuller and Harley have argued, initiatives of airport security often 'flatten difference into manageable contours' (2004, 104) so that passengers are either safe or dangerous, legitimate or illegitimate, immigrants or citizens. These differences, furthermore, are often drawn upon before the passenger enters the airport through existing frameworks of racialisation and criminalisation so that, as with the case in *Border Patrol*, the biopolitical space of the airport does not, in fact, treat all passengers equally as potential threats, but privileges particular individuals as less risky.

While the airport has been described as a biopolitical space where bare life is continually produced, Agamben's conception of bare life is thus problematised when examining the treatment of both non-New Zealanders and racialised New Zealanders in *Border Patrol* and the news stories discussed above. Scholars such as Alexander G. Weheylie (2015) have critiqued Agamben's bare life as dismissing the role of race in particular. Weheylie argues that this 'absolute biological substance' that Agamben discusses cannot exist because 'in the history of modernity this field always already

appears in the form of racializing assemblages' (65). For him, humans are always already subject to sociopolitical processes through which they are racialised, meaning that bare life is never 'bare' but always inherently politicised. Indeed, as demonstrated in the case of border security, passengers such as the Tunisian-New Zealanders are already subject to racialising assemblages and apparatuses of criminality before they enter airport space, obfuscated by the ostensibly neutral deployment of security technologies.

Furthermore, Wilson and Weber argue that bureaucratic forms of surveillance connected with international air travel as anticipatory means of border control, while risk reducing in theory, may be punitive in their effect (2008, 125). Such initiatives are perhaps more concerned with making people feel safe in the airport than actually making them safer (Adey 2008b, 152). These politics of difference, while implemented as an imperative of (inter)national security, work in equal measure at an affective level, by which the amplification of difference is used to inspire passenger confidence, create the 'feeling' of security and a perceived level of safety. In her work on the affective politics of race in airports, Sunshine Kamaloni (2016) suggests that 'the relationship between space and race is defined by inequality and difference' (67), using her experience as a black woman in the airport to describe the ways in which she is differentiated not only by airport security mechanisms, but also by other passengers. The politics of difference in airports, then, are not inherently top-down but also operate at the local level through passengers themselves.

The news stories drawn upon above following the classification of particular New Zealand citizens as 'risky' and thus requiring further examination at (and beyond) the border suggests citizenship is, in these scenarios, not fully constituted, but interrogated and performed at a number of thresholds. Salter argues that 'it is the decision to admit or expel the citizen – who already has a claim on the sovereign – which is the real limit of the population and thus the performance of sovereignty' (2008, 375). These mechanisms of security act as an extension of the sovereign power to ban or include, not only capturing non-citizens, but those who have previously been deemed 'safe' and as belonging to the polis. Border security engenders the routine performance of both the sovereign and its subject, so that 'every new arrival is a stranger, even the identity/knowledge granted by admission is temporary, arbitrary and able to be reversed' (Salter 2008, 375). Never entirely safe, the space of the border is constantly reinscribed; as Louise Amoore (2006) suggests, 'since the identity of the subject can never be entirely secured, the practices that rely upon the calling into being of specific subjectivities – terrorist, immigrant, asylum seeker – can never consider their work complete' (344).

## **Conclusion**

New Zealand international airports are positioned in relation to a number of interacting contexts, entangled in national discourses of biosecurity and immigration along with

larger paradigms of global movement, risk management and neoliberalism. The representation of airport security practices to a national audience through shows like *Border Patrol*, which interpellate a self-managing and responsible citizen and news stories regarding border security, which emphasise difference reinscribe the relationships between the state and its citizens through multiple sites. Representations of how the passenger's journey through the airport is encouraged, stopped, questioned or disallowed thus work in a way which produce the airports as distinctly national spaces that require specific performances of subjectivity and citizenship in order for passengers to move through. The media representations of the 'safe' citizen, the 'dangerous' citizen, the immigrant and the drug smuggler set up these airports as sites where individuals experience paths of mobility differently. The proliferation of media stories regarding the security of New Zealand's borders, along with the popularity of *Border Patrol* (Season Eight was broadcast from July 2016 and Season Nine from June 2017), indicate both an anxiety and fascination with the policing of the New Zealand's borders in the popular imaginary. Representations of passenger experience at the airport can both increase and alleviate anxiety over a preoccupation with travel, national security, and the individual's position in it, so that it is a powerful tool for mobilising a population.

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