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Temporary Lives: Border Temporalities and Retirement Mobilities in a Turkish Tourism Hot Spot

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The recognition that state borders operate not only through a production and ordering of space but also of time has recently led to a more concerted interest in the temporal dimensions of borders. In the fields of migration and border studies, researchers have suggested that borders are implicated in the creation and transformation of particular “time-spaces” that hierarchically order space and time. These b/ordering practices tend to be examined in relation to states and state forces, often neglecting the importance of economic dimensions. This article contributes to analysing border temporalities in their hierarchical aspects by focusing on the complex relationship between political (state) borders and the frontiers of capital. This relationship is examined empirically through a focus on the lives of German retirement migrants in Turkey. While retirement migration is motivated by the search for a “good life” that is free from the temporal constraints of wage labour biographies, it will be shown that German retirement migrants are highly vulnerable to the temporal bordering processes produced by both state policies and transnational capitalist profit-seeking in the tourism and real estate sectors.

Keywords: international retirement migration; time-space compression; tourism; political economy.

Introduction¹

The phenomenon of elderly or international retirement migration (IRM) has, up to now, interested a rather small set of migration researchers, often as part of a broader concern with ageing in migration or cross-border constellations. Connected to neither labour markets nor forced displacement, IRM tends to be classified as a privileged form of cross-border mobility available only to affluent elderly people (O’Reilly & Benson 2016). IRM is linked to the cross-border search for a better quality of life after retirement, as well as forms of mobility and residence abroad that tend to

be accessible only to economically privileged retirees, usually from “Western”—or, within Europe, “Northern”—countries, who move to destinations that also draw international tourism due to their ecological and cultural climates (Castilla-Polo et al. 2023; King et al. 2021). However, the specificities of retirement migration are also quite obviously linked to the senior status of those seeking a better quality of life abroad. Retirement usually implies not only withdrawal from professional careers, wage labour, and income-generating activities, but also having entered a “later” stage of life. The title

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of a well-known book on IRM, *Sunset Lives* (King et al. 2000), refers both to the retirees' seeking of sunnier, warmer climates and to the metaphorical phase of life in which the natural time span of human existence is drawing to a close. Freed from the temporal constraints of wage labour and professional demands, retirement is also understood to allow for a "slowing down" of life and more self-determination, not just in one's chosen activities, but also in the speed of conducting them. Retirement holds the promise of escaping the relentless time regime that values speed, a measure of distance divided by time, as a central driver of productivity.

Such a time regime, it has been argued, is the result of a new temporal social order that has emerged since the development of industrial capitalism and the spread of wage labour, with capitalism's primary goal of increasing profits and shortening the circulation time of capital profoundly affecting not only economic processes, but social and cultural life globally (Altvater 1989; Harvey 1989; Jameson 1991). In a recent collaborative research project that aimed to study the social networks and care arrangements of German and German-Turkish retirement migrants in the city of Alanya, a prominent international tourism hot spot in Turkey, our research team did not therefore expect questions of time to figure prominently in retirees' lives beyond the time horizon of said "sunset phase".

However, we realized that temporal constraints and considerations were in fact a crucial element of life as experienced by our research subjects. Thus, we turned our attention to their coping mechanisms: short-term tactics that were articulated as cross-border movements that could also be termed as forms of "tactical mobility" (Kahveci et al. 2020). Drawing on De Certeau, we define tactical mobility as an "art of the weak" (De Certeau 1984), referring to situationally calculated movements across borders that seek to make the best, temporarily, out of conditions set out by dominant state and economic actors that retirees are powerless to change.

In this article, I want to build upon this work and foreground the time-related challenges of IRM lives, in addition to trying to understand them within wider attempts to theorize border temporalities. In the following, I will briefly outline the need for such theorizations to include a concern with economic forces, particularly with those of contemporary globalized capitalism and its temporal dynamics. I will then attempt to make sense of the temporal constraints that affect IRM lives in Alanya by examining the inter-related, sometimes mutually reinforcing and complementary, impacts of state-driven border policies and capital-driven developments as they produce dynamic border temporalities. To conclude, I will argue that it is necessary to expand the investigation of capital-driven border temporalities beyond the study of labour migration and related policies.

Border Temporalities and Capital

In both border studies and migration studies, concerns with space and spatial dynamics have long overshadowed any significant interest in time and temporality as they impact border regimes and migration processes (Barber & Lem 2018; Little 2015). However, interdisciplinary attention to the temporal dimensions of geopolitical borders has increased in recent years (Bossong et al. 2017; Gerst et al. 2021; Hastings et al. 2017; Leutloff-Grandits 2021). Beyond the now widely accepted premise that borders always need to be understood as changing and dynamic in historical contexts, manifesting a 'complex temporality' (Little 2014), scholars have paid attention to how borders are mobilized to construct different temporal orders that hierarchically separate "us" and "them" (Adam 2002; Landau 2019), as well as the ways in which bordering processes speed up or slow down human mobility across borders, particularly that of irregular migrants (McNevin & Missbach 2018; Ramsay 2017; 2020; Van Houtum 2021). The experience and perception of time among refugees, other migrants, and border region residents constitutes another growing field of interest in which the operation of borders and border policies is connected to questions of temporality (Çağlar 2018; Griffiths 2014; Leutloff-Grandits 2021). Another focus in the academic literature is on the role of states in constructing, managing, and sometimes also contesting and transforming borders and border regimes through temporal dynamics (Hage 2009; Tazzioli 2018; Van Houtum 2013). A widely shared feature of these literatures on borders, migration, and temporal dynamics is indeed the foregrounding of state (ir)rationalities in the production of border temporalities.

However, critical approaches to migration in border studies have pointed out that borders also need to be understood in relation to economic dimensions of historical and contemporary globalization, most notably in relation to the emergence of capitalism as a globally dominant economic system that both impacts and operates through a global border regime (Jones 2016; Mezzadra 2020; Walia 2021). Beyond the focus of human cross-border mobility and border regimes, this literature connects it to global value chains, the outsourcing of production, the emergence of transnational corporations, global finance markets, austerity, and structural adjustment programmes, as the functions of borders extend well beyond the regulation of migration. Examining the situation of German retirement migrants in Turkey, I seek to show that engaging with economic dynamics that are articulated with the border and migration governance of state actors is necessary in order to understand IRM time constraints and patterns of mobility. To do so, I draw on a concept that was conceived quite some time ago, but offers an additional, rather neglected perspective on border temporalities: that of time-space compression.

Formulated by the human geographer David Harvey and based on his reading of Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*, the concept of time-space compression denotes the *increasing conquest of space by time*, the speeding up of modern life under industrial capitalism in which time quite literally translates into money (Harvey 1989; 1990). Harvey locates the origin of this acceleration in the industrial production process, in which increased output in a given time period and quick reinvestment of capital translates into increases in surplus value.² Given how prominent the concern with speed has been for an understanding of (post)modernity across the social and cultural sciences (e.g., Virilio 1986; Jameson 1991), it is surprising that it has so far remained rather marginal in the discussion of border temporalities and migration. One notable exception is the influential work of Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson (2013). In their analysis of contemporary border temporalities, they offer several avenues for thinking about heterogeneous temporalities as connected to borders under contemporary capitalism. The one that most closely continues the concern with time-space compression is articulated in the concept of "frontiers of capital":

One of our central points is that contemporary capital, characterized by processes of financialization and the combination of heterogeneous labor and accumulation regimes, negotiates the expansion of its frontiers with much more complex assemblages of power and law, which include but also transcend nation-states. (ibid., 5-6)

Beyond acceleration, the concept of the frontier foregrounds the expansionist qualities of capitalist dynamics, suggesting that borders in the context of capital are necessarily not only shifting but seeking to expand (Schetter & Müller-Koné 2021). Not only is the speeding up of production, circulation, and consumption processes across space necessary to increase profits, but these need to be reinvested in further, expanded production, leading to a dynamic transformation, subjection, and incorporation of a prior "outside" space into the folds of capital. The frontiers of capital are therefore characterized by two elements: "capital's expansionist drive but also its need to organize space according to multiple hierarchical criteria" (Mezzadra & Neilson 2013, 66). Geopolitical borders and deterritorialized bordering practices can be understood, from this perspective, as functional to the stabilization and intensification of global inequalities that variously aid capital accumulation. While not deeply engaging with literatures on border economies and capitalist globalization, their work opens the door towards examining time-space compression in these fields. In a similar vein, though not interested in migration, Ngai-Ling Sum and Robert Hassan have differently focused on the time-space dimensions of capitalist restructuring for an analysis of trans-border regions (Sum 1999) and contemporary globalization patterns (Hassan 2010).

The productivity of border regimes certainly cannot be understood in relation to capitalism alone, but ignoring the impact of capitalism and, more broadly, economic relations on border regimes as they are shaped within the contemporary world system would mean that the relationship between border temporalities and time-space compression cannot be adequately explored.

(Post)Modernity, Acceleration, and Retirement

The temporal consequences of (post)industrial capitalism have for a considerable period also been addressed with regard to their impact on life rhythms and perceptions of time, though usually without an explicit focus on the varying contexts of globalization and geopolitical borders within which such dynamics are identified. Yet, the work of Barbara Adam, Robert Hassan, and Hartmut Rosa explore how the irreducibly social qualities of time allow the connection of time-space compression to human, including migrant, sociality and experience (Adam 1990; Hassan 2010; Rosa 2005). Adam speaks of timescapes in order to point out that we can speak of time only contextually with reference to spatiality and materiality (2005). Rosa identifies acceleration as a fundamental principle of time-space compression in capitalist modernity that affects both the dependability of social institutions and the pace of individual lives, leading many to stressfully experience time as a scarce resource (2013). The mechanisms driving this acceleration, Rosa has no doubt, are closely linked to the basic principles and laws of profit that drive capitalist economies (2013, 35). The basic principles driving capitalist employment practices and production circuits leave their imprint on almost all areas of social life and cultural production and perception, Rosa argues. A competition- and profit-oriented economic system that measures its achievements as work accomplished within definable time-spans pressurizes everyone who is engaged in wage labour to accomplish more in less time. Workers in the Global South in particular, but also different groups of migrants, have been shown to face such pressures to extreme degrees, involving destitution, unsafe labour conditions, child labour, and other forms of exploitation and endangerment. The literature on labour migration is rife with terrible tales of exploitation which often take temporal forms, such as extreme working hours, delayed remuneration, and temporary and zero-hour contracts. It is therefore not surprising that questions of migrant temporalities linked to capitalist dynamics have until now most often been discussed in relation to labour migration (Mezzadra & Neilson 2013; Walia 2021).

International retirement migration, on the other hand, has tended to be seen as a form of privileged lifestyle migration, as discussed at the beginning of this article: privileged not only because IRM migrants are imagined

as relatively well-to-do citizens of rich countries in the Global North, but possibly also because they appear to have left behind the stressful pressures of their former working lives. Acceleration is associated with wage labour and the drive for profit, whereas retirement allows people to step out of the pressure to perform. Slowing down is thus not only a lamentable consequence of diminishing corporeal abilities in advanced age, but can also be seen as a promise associated with retirement. As already stated above, this promise was thrown into doubt for the IRM retirees in Alanya who took part in our study.

IRM Migration in Alanya

Initially unconcerned with questions of time and speed, the aforementioned research project on retirement migrants in the Turkish seaside town and tourist destination of Alanya was instead focused on transnational care networks and the social dynamics connecting migrant retirees to each other and to their place of residence. However, as we began to investigate these topics through participant observation and problem-centred interviews (Witzel 1985), temporal concerns emerged as a key issue in the lives of IRM retirees, in the form of various pressures and constraints linked to their migratory projects. Research with German and German-Turkish retirees was carried out between August and December 2017 in Alanya and the surrounding area. The town, a beach resort on the Turkish Riviera, has been a favourite destination of German and other foreign tourists for several decades and is known for its large community of German retirement migrants (Kaiser 2012). A total of 67 interviews were carried out with respondents, all of whom were retirees who still had a registered address in Germany and had spent at least three months per year in the Alanya area over the course of the last several years. We interviewed 34 German retirees who had never held a Turkish passport. The other 33 interviewees were German-Turkish retirees who had been born in Turkey and spent their working lives in Germany. Most of our respondents travelled several times a year between Alanya and a place of residence in Germany, but also to other German cities in order to visit children and other relatives and friends who remained in Germany. For the purposes of this article, I will mostly focus on the former group—those who held the status of foreign tourists or EU residents in Turkey—but will draw comparisons when apt.

Both groups of retirees were quite heterogeneous in terms of their travel practices, residence status, temporality, and the duration of their stays. In the German group, only one interviewee made monthly visits to Germany. 13 respondents were travelling between Alanya and Germany with tourist visas, which limited their stays to a maximum of 90 days in a six-month period, thus relatively evenly dividing their time between the two countries. Fourteen respondents

held short-term residence permits for Turkey and usually spent two to three months per year in Germany during the Christmas and summer periods. Six of our interviewees held permanent residence permits in Turkey. The German-Turkish respondents either held only Turkish passports with permanent resident status in Germany, had dual citizenship, or held a "blue card", giving them residence rights equivalent to those of Turkish citizens.

Thus, temporal constraints regarding residence, due to visa issues, did not arise for everyone in our sample, but did so for the large group of retirees who did not hold citizenship in both countries, or such equivalent rights. In this group, everybody had to be mindful of the time-bound nature of the visa regulations and rules that these countries had put in place. Turkish citizens had to make sure they did not overstay their sojourn outside of Germany, thereby risking their German permanent residence rights. German citizens, especially those on tourist visas, had to count their days in Turkey in order to not fall foul of visa regulations. Moreover, IRM migrants could not count on regulations remaining stable, as they had witnessed changes in the past and were often unsure of how to interpret them. How to interpret the regulations and how to cope with changes was a constant topic of discussion in seniors' online and personal communications in Alanya. These constraints relate to temporalities that can be quite clearly associated with state-regulated border regimes and visa regulations (Kosnick et al. 2021).

The concept of time-space compression in this regard does not seem necessary in order to understand the visa and residence policies that force IRM migrants to consider and plan around the temporal limitations of their stay. The benefit of the empirical analysis presented thus far would simply be to include retirement migrants among the wider group of migrants affected by state-induced time regimes. In order to understand IRM border temporalities through the lens of dynamics set in motion by the operations of capital, it is necessary to engage more closely with the broader economic dynamics that underlie IRM migration, within the context of Alanya's tourism economy and its status as a highly internationalized location and border town.

Alanya as a Border and Frontier Town

In border studies, the notion of a border town is most often applied to towns in geopolitical regions along borders that separate nation-states. This is not the case for the city of Alanya, which is part of a region that generates almost a third of all tourism-related income in Turkey. However, given the by now well-established insight that borders not only operate in border regions, but are operative both externally and internally within nation-states and other political formations, it becomes possible to trace their operations in other geopolitical

localities as well, in addition to examining both their proliferation and heterogenization (Mezzadra & Neilson 2013, 3). I thus argue that Alanya can be termed a border town in the sense that its social, economic, and cultural life is dominated by the encounters between people of different nationalities and residence statuses on a regular basis. The fact that their presence is both seasonal and mostly temporary points to the importance of international tourism, which forms the basis of economic life in Alanya, dominating and interlacing their lives.

International tourism is the dominant source of income for those with economic interests in the city, with visitors having been coming here for decades—primarily from Germany, but also more recently from Denmark, the Netherlands, and, for the past decade, increasingly from Russia and Arab countries. Tourism from Russia increased even more after that country's war against Ukraine started, as other foreign destinations restricted travel for Russian citizens. As a form of voluntary and temporal cross-border mobility, international tourism does not feature as a prominent topic in either border studies or migration studies. While scholars of migration have for some time pointed out that it can be difficult to clearly distinguish between tourism-related international travel and migration (Castilla-Polo et al. 2023; Lenz 2010), the former is usually associated with forms of mobility that are encouraged by receiving states, due to the economic benefits, and is associated mostly with brief sojourns. In fact, a fast turnover of tourists is beneficial for tourism economies as it increases profits in logistics and travel-associated services, highlighting again the economic importance of acceleration.

As a vacation destination, Turkey has risen in prominence over recent years despite its political upheavals and catastrophic events such as the severe earthquake of 2022. In 2022, close to six million visitors from Germany came to Turkey, nearly reaching the record numbers of 2019, before Covid restrictions came in (General Directorate 2024). This rise took place despite the devastating earthquake of February 2022 in the south-eastern regions of the country. As explained above, the statistics on tourism also include a share of IRM migrants who move between the two countries and do not stay for more than 90 days in a six-month period. Most foreign visitors book package holidays and remain within the infrastructures that local tourism offers: all-inclusive meals at hotels, beach visits within walking distance, drinks near the boardwalk. Tourist infrastructures are globalized not only through visitors from abroad, but also in their investment and other financial operations: as in most international tourism destinations, package holidays are mostly offered by and mediated through transnational travel corporations such as TUI or Booking.com, which take a significant share of profits. This is also the case in Alanya, which has been an established international tourist destination for over three decades.

Turkish seaside tourism is mostly a seasonal economic activity, with certain times of the year seeing large numbers of tourists and thus being responsible for a large share of surplus production. In Alanya, the population of the city contracts and expands with the tourist season. The resident population size is currently just over 350,000, with more than 50,000 of this figure registered as foreign residents, but more than a million tourists from abroad visit the city each year. While visitors from Germany still dominate in terms of numbers, Russian visitors have almost caught up with them, and, as mentioned above, tourism from Scandinavian countries, the UK, and Middle Eastern countries makes for a very diverse international setting. The city is also a temporary site of residence and labour for refugees, particularly from Syria, who have temporary protection status and tend to work in Turkey's informal economy (Ertorer 2021). The wider Antalya province in which Alanya is located is not known for a particularly high concentration of Syrian refugees like, as could be expected, the provinces along the border with Syria are, but they are actually present all over the country. Turkey has the largest Syrian refugee population worldwide, with more than three million Syrians having fled there as a consequence of the war and ongoing military conflict in their home country (UNHCR 2024). Due at least in part to the mostly informal nature of their labour market participation, these refugees remain relatively invisible in the city. This reflects their status in the wider economy, where foreign informal workers remain "behind the scenes", working in construction as well as in cleaning and other service occupations that have a high share of informal labour arrangements. In the tourism economy, as elsewhere, informal labour implies lower wages, longer and seasonal working hours, no guaranteed income, and potentially unsafe working conditions—all factors that can increase profits for employers and contribute to the "cheapening" of tourism as a product (Ekiz-Gökmen 2018). However, during our initial research with German retirement migrants, they showed little awareness of the presence of refugees in the city. German retirement migrants were mostly content to live in the niches of the well-established existing German tourism infrastructures, and to socialize with each other online in dedicated Facebook groups, at the local German church, or in German-themed restaurants and bars. This corresponds to a local hotel infrastructure that tends to separate tourists along national lines.

Despite these forms of national segregation, within these groups it is quite difficult to clearly distinguish between those who can be classified as tourists, as retirement migrants, as refugees, or as people living in exile. As has been explained above, lines cannot always be clearly drawn, and official statistics do not show the full picture: retirement migrants who consider themselves residents might hold tourist status, tourists from Ukraine might in fact have taken refuge, Syrian refugees might not be registered as holding temporary

protection status. These difficulties of classification show that state-related border politics operate not only at territorial border lines and ports of entry, but are also operative within the country of (however temporary) residence, a by now well-established point in border and migration studies. It is in this sense that Alanya can be termed a border town, despite not being situated on a geopolitical territorial border line. The capitalist *frontier* aspects of border temporalities in Alanya come to the fore only when examining the wider setting of the local tourism economy and real estate market, in which low-income IRM migrants find it increasingly difficult to thrive.

IRM Economic Pressures

For the international retirement migrants from Germany that we interviewed, deciding which status category made sense for them—that of tourist or of short- or long-term foreign resident—was not only a bureaucratic but primarily a financial question. Obtaining long-term residency was a cumbersome process that required continuous residence in the country for eight years—unrealistic for most retirees. Short-term residence permits for one to a maximum of two years were considered expensive by many, usually costing upward of 200 euros, with not only governmental fees to be paid, but also notary services for the translation and certification of documents, as well as a bank statement showing a minimum account balance of about 8,000 euros, being required for a year-long permit.

To complement our interview data, we also carried out a survey among German retirees in Alanya to learn more about the demographic features and financial situations of respondents.³ Based on 105 valid responses, roughly equally from men and women, we concluded that most respondents had held blue-collar jobs during their working lives, had experienced periods of unemployment, or had engaged in non-remunerated housework and child-rearing. The average retirement income reported was around 1,300 euros, which might have been overreported. In both the interviews and the participant observations carried out with retirees, we learned about numerous instances of financial difficulties faced by our respondents. The majority of our interviewees cited the lower cost of living in Turkey as a strong motive for their retirement migration. Housing, food, transport, and other necessities, as well as recreational activities, could be obtained for much less in Alanya, allowing for a standard of living that many felt they could no longer maintain in Germany (Kahveci et al. 2020). These findings align with other empirical studies that reveal some forms of retirement migration to be motivated or marked by economic precarity (Repetti et al. 2018; Repetti & Calasanti 2023).

Most of our respondents rented small apartments, while only some were fortunate enough to own self-occupied

housing. Travel patterns were often adapted to avoid competing for airline tickets with short-term tourists during high season, with retirees aiming to find the cheapest fares. While many planned trips to Germany to take advantage of their German statutory health insurance in order to get medical attention, dental care—which is not covered by that insurance—was instead planned for stays in Alanya and nearby, where medical tourism businesses cater to scores of international visitors. From the perspective of German retirement migrants, the question of what they can afford with limited finances had priority in their mobility practices and their perceptions of temporality. If we shift the perspective to the question of how Alanya functions as a border town based on a tourism economy, even more economic dimensions of border temporalities come to the fore.

Tourism and Turkey's Economic Crisis

Cheap mass tourism in Alanya and its surrounding areas is based on a high turnover of visitors, usually arriving by plane for package holidays that are mostly sold by transnational travel corporations. In light of its more recent economic difficulties, Turkey is in desperate need of the foreign currency influx that international tourism brings. Tourism is one of the most important economic sectors in the country and is growing in importance in the wake of rampant inflation that has increased the demand for foreign currencies (Yilmaz & Oktay 2018). It is therefore both an economic and political priority for the government to further expand the tourism economy, partly through investment in infrastructural projects and construction of hotels and vacation homes. It is here that the concept of frontier is particularly useful in describing the expansive operations of capital in a tourist town that is implicated in these dynamics, with increasing numbers of foreign visitors and intensive construction activities. These dynamics need to be situated in the wider context of Turkey's struggling economy.

The country's current economic difficulties—which, in 2018, culminated in its most recent economic crisis—are connected to the temporal dynamics associated with the global movement of finance capital: Turkish economists Orhangazi and Yeldan have linked the crisis to structural reforms that have led to foreign debt accumulation and over-reliance on “hot money flows” in Turkey (2020). The term hot money refers to speculative finance capital which can be moved across the globe at very short notice (Baily et al. 2000). Turkey had begun to implement structural adjustment programmes, as demanded by the IMF after the debt crisis of 2001, leading to an initial economic boom that was supported by massive foreign capital inflows and domestic private credit expansion. High interest rates offered by the Turkish government initially attracted foreign capital that was focused on portfolio investment and debt

flows, leading to an over-valuation of the Turkish Lira and an increasing build-up of external debt. This form of economic growth weakened rather than supported industrial production and did not lead to significant job creation, except in the construction sector. When global conditions changed and Turkey underwent a series of political crises, foreign speculative capital was quickly withdrawn, inflation became rampant, and unemployment soared. The extreme speed with which foreign capital can be shifted across national borders renders hot money dangerous for economic stability and sustainable growth. As Ngai-Ling Sum has stated in her analysis of financial time-space governance, the movement of "stateless" funds across borders happens almost instantaneously, "...oriented to the nano-seconds of computer operations" (1999, 125). The impact of such speculative capital and its temporal dynamics on the Turkish economy can be identified in several dimensions that compound the temporal pressures we observed in retirement migrants' lives: the ongoing inflation and devaluation of the Turkish Lira, the boom and bust of the construction sector and its related housing crisis, and the interrelated push to force low-income foreigners out of touristic residential neighborhoods, as will be explained below.

Growing the foreign tourism sector in Turkey promises not only job creation but also much-needed foreign currency. However, volatile political and economic conditions have negatively impacted the tourism sector, with a failed coup attempt, regional political conflicts, and the Covid crisis all contributing to a temporary decline in international tourism until 2022. While the devaluation of the Turkish Lira renders some aspects of tourism cheaper for international visitors, the local population has had to grapple with rising prices, including for housing. The construction boom in Turkey, fuelled by foreign capital and linked to affordable housing loans, had set off a "speculative wave" in the real estate sector, leading to rising prices and rents (Orhangazi & Yeldan 2020, 13). International real estate investment increased massively after the financial crisis of 2008–2009, with capital investment funds running out of other lucrative investment options and seeing residential real estate markets as a comparatively safe frontier for capital, given their low interest rates and the strong demand for housing. Investment by foreign residents in real estate has also played a role in this wave: foreigners can obtain citizenship in Turkey via investing or spending at least 400,000 US dollars on an apartment or house. So-called lifestyle migration has been identified as a driver of new forms of transnational gentrification in urban settings, displacing lower-income residents (Hayes & Zaban 2020).

In the years leading up to 2022, Turkey's tourist regions have attracted an increasing number of property buyers from abroad, with most residential units sold in 2022 being purchased by Russian citizens, followed by those from Iran and Iraq, with Germans in fourth place (İmtilak

Real Estate 2023). Investment by foreigners in Turkish real estate has become a strategy for both securing funds through investment abroad and generating profit through rising rents in markets where housing is a scarce resource. A rise in real estate and rental costs in Turkey can quickly be transmitted to tenants, as rental contracts are usually only drawn up and extended on a yearly basis, and Alanya has seen steep increases. The municipality of Alanya has complained repeatedly that civil servants and other locally important professionals can no longer afford to live in the city, as the rents are too high. Its tourism industry with its low wages has difficulties finding workers who can afford to live locally. The rise in rents also affects Alanya's lower-income retirement migrants from Germany, who in the past could be fairly certain of finding rental housing that was affordable or even cheap by their standards. This is no longer the case. IRM migrants compete economically with other lower-income foreign residents and Turkish locals in a tight rental housing market, a situation now compounded by new residence restrictions.

Residence Restrictions for Foreigners

With declining economic fortunes and national elections looming, Turkey's government recently initiated a number of changes and new regulations that it claimed were to protect the local Turkish population and drive down housing costs in particularly affected areas that also attract tourism. The measures highlight the need to pay attention to the interplay of economic and state-driven dimensions of border temporalities. In the summer of 2022, the Turkish government placed bans on foreigners moving to over 1,000 different urban districts where the proportion of foreign residents is especially high (Directorate of Immigration Administration 2022). These districts include areas popular among so-called lifestyle migrants, but also those where refugees have tended to concentrate. While at first glance a spatial regulation, this in fact works through a temporal component, in that foreigners can no longer get short-term residence permits that are linked to a place of residence in the designated areas. This domestically quite popular political measure implicitly targets both unwanted low-income immigrants from countries of the former Soviet Union and the increasingly unwanted Syrian refugee population, the largest group of low-income foreigners in Turkey, but it also affects lower-income retirement migrants from Germany (Deutschlandfunk 2023). The majority of districts in Alanya and its surroundings, where the latter have tended to rent apartments, are now off-limits to all incoming foreigners who do not have permanent residence status, including those who need to renew their rental contracts.

However, the ban on foreigners is not absolute: those who can spend over 75,000 US dollars to buy a property in big cities are exempt from this regulation

and are still able to get a property investment residence permit. Those who spend over 400,000 US dollars can still be fast-tracked to Turkish citizenship. The interest in attracting foreign currency trumps the aim of limiting transnational gentrification, and does not impede the aim of targeting unwanted foreign residents, particularly Syrian refugees. Lower-income foreign retirement migrants who do not have permanent residence status cannot afford properties in the designated price range, and thus face the prospect of not having their existing residence permits extended. Apart from rising rents that the latter migrants find increasingly difficult to afford, the new regulations render their residence status in Alanya more and more precarious. German tenants in districts not falling under the new regulation also report problems with residence applications, contributing to a growing sense of insecurity. Alanya's German Facebook groups abound with discussions concerning the new regulations, with many elderly participants expressing consternation, confusion, and shock. As one of them commented: "I wanted to grow old and be happy here, but now I will have to wait and see for how long my residence permit will be extended". Others concluded: "[o]nly rich people are welcome now".⁴

For low-income IRM migrants from Germany, time and space have become literally compressed in the current environment of Turkey's tourism economy, however not quite as Harvey imagined. Unable to meet the investment threshold that would fast-track them to Turkish citizenship or at least permanent residence, they—like other lower income residents—are exposed to a surge in rental costs on the back of high demand and high inflation in a dynamic rental market that offers little long-term security. While for several decades they were able to carve out a niche existence in the spaces of a tourism economy oriented towards lower-income tourists from Germany, the contemporary dynamics of the real estate market and the foreign currency interests of the Turkish state now combine to exclude them from the two categories of foreigners currently welcome in tourist destinations: the rich investor and the short-term tourist. Facing the possibility of not getting their residence permits extended, IRM migrants from Germany face new time pressures regarding their stay. In addition, as the majority of them do not hold long-term residence permits, the spaces in which they are allowed to take up residence have become restricted, forcing them out of the most desirable tourism neighborhoods.

Conclusion

In this article, I have advanced the idea that the border temporalities of international retirement migration in a Turkish tourism destination need to be examined not only through the lens of bordering strategies and practices enacted by the state, but also through the lens of profit-driven economic forces that differentially

impact the lives of all visitors and longer-term residents in Alanya. German international retirement migrants have been shown to be pressed for time, not because their lives are so busy, but because the intersecting forces of capital and the state create temporal pressures regarding their residence in the city. Despite having retired, they face temporal stress and uncertainty over their future in Alanya because both their status as foreigners and their relatively low income—as compared to other foreigners—expose them to the risk of displacement and expulsion. State regulations regarding short-term residence have been shown to combine with a heated housing market that not only threatens to price them out of their neighbourhoods, but potentially out of the town, or even country, altogether. Home to very diverse groups of highly mobile foreign and local residents, Alanya is therefore a border town where different groups, and the space they occupy, are indeed organized "... according to multiple hierarchical criteria", as Mezzadra and Neilson have formulated (2013, 66). The tourist experience, and thus the generation of profits through tourism, rely on borders that separate different international and functionally distinct social groups and allow tourists to not have to engage with those living in conditions of precarity.

Also key to this hierarchical organization are the temporal dynamics that structure life in Alanya: the temporal nature of tourism has consequences for both the way in which visitors relate to residents and the way in which the local economy is set up. Life in Alanya is marked by both temporariness and speed: temporariness, because state regulations and financial circumstances make not only tourism, but also the sojourn of refugees, a time-limited experience; and speed, because the higher the turnover of tourists, the larger the profit margins in the tourism industry. Temporal users are key to the tourism economy, and can both sustain and displace local residents, as for example with the foreign second home ownership and investment that prices locals, as well as low-income foreign residents, out of the city. The tourism economy profits more from short-term visitors than from foreign retirement migrants who compete with locals for affordable housing. While the mass tourism sector can generate profits through the cheapening of labour costs and high turnover, the construction sector and the international residential real estate market thrive on high prices and increasing rents that can be enforced due to high demand and shorter supply. Both exhibit different but interrelated frontiers of capital that can be expanded in the interest of generating profit for private and corporate actors, but that also deliver benefits in terms of taxes and foreign currency for the Turkish state.

Low-income retirement migrants from Germany, who in the recent past were able to improve their standard of living and realize their dreams of retirement in a sunny

beach location by moving to a low-income country, now find themselves not only pressed for time and space, but potentially have to look for a liveable future elsewhere. This certainly still puts them in a relatively privileged position compared to Syrian refugees whose very survival can be at stake when facing destitution or expulsion back to Syria, and whose roles in the tourism industry and in the wider life of the city deserve to be examined in detail elsewhere. However, this article has tried to demonstrate that capital-driven border temporalities affect not only irregular and labour migrants, but, in this case, a group of older migrants whose retirement status does not protect them from the dynamics of profit-seeking in the tourism economy.

In this article, I have attempted to show the benefits of extending the analysis of border temporalities from the up to now predominant focus on state-driven forms of governing migration and border regimes to include capital-driven dynamics. While this inclusion is typically found in discussions of labor migration and studies examining the impact of migration upon labor markets, I argue that the analysis of other types of migration and cross-border mobility might benefit from it as well. What is more, for those interested in not just the spatial but also temporal operations of border regimes, attending to the economic operations of borders that differently channel the transnational mobility of finance capital, industrial production, commerce, and migration can offer a better understanding of the complex intersectional, dynamic timescapes that borders help to produce. In that sense, examining the relationship between borders and the frontiers of capital seems a promising undertaking both empirically and theoretically. With its focus on the lives of German retirement migrants in Turkey, this article has traced but a few of their connections, but has hopefully demonstrated that such an undertaking might be worthwhile.

Endnotes

- 1 I thank the anonymous reviewers for their extremely helpful suggestions and criticism. Part of this article draws on empirical research conducted with funding from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft: [Grant Number 300243171].
- 2 While Harvey is credited with developing the concept of time-space compression, he was not the first to suggest that acceleration became key not only to economic processes, but to life under capitalism in general. As the late German political scientist Elmar Altvater succinctly put it in a 1987 article later translated into English: "To shorten the circulation time of capital is a principle inherent in capitalist development" (Altvater 1989, 59).
- 3 We had to give up on the attempt to do the same for German-Turkish respondents, as they were much more reluctant to participate.
- 4 As posted on the Facebook pages of the German-Turkish Friendship Association HürTürk Alanya (July 7, 2022). Available: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/292051711533917>.

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