

SOC 576 Cultural Aspects of Migration, Urbanity and Gender

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Position paper 2

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Easterling, K.: Zone

In the chapter dealing with zones, Keller Easterling sets out to map the emergence of a phenomenon that may nowadays be called zones. From several ports and free trade zones, it has developed into a global phenomenon including business centres, university campuses as well as hi-tech resorts.

Some of the major characteristics of these areas include the other than state power being exercised in the area, which Easterling calls *extrastatecraft*, different kinds of law exemption, the fact that the zones themselves are well interconnected and present themselves as autonomous urban areas; they are sometimes called 'cities' while usually adjacent to an actual city; and last but not least, they carry a certain image or lifestyle.

According to Easterling, the architects play a special role in creating these exceptional places by spatially articulating their exclusiveness and thus actually being their main creators. This is easily questionable by the fact that an architect always needs an investor and his wish that is to be fulfilled, by which I do not mean to call an architect a pure tool of creating the zones, but they are definitely not their inventors.

Although definitely touching the most prominent issues of power legitimacy and urban planning decisions of nowadays, Easterling does not get rid of a conspiracy-like tone of describing the situation, which has a harmful effect on an otherwise heavy and well formulated argument. One is able to feel the sharpness of the analysis of zones, which base its power on the lack of information, without using the word 'special stupidity' and other clearly non-academic concepts.

Easterling, K. (2008). 'Zone.' in *Urban Transformation*. A. Ruby & I. Ruby (eds). Berlin, Ruby Press: 30-45.