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Border Security Affects the Way Migrants Are Defined in the Societies They Enter and/or Exit

What is this research about?

Border security regulates the physical mobility of people in and out of a country. However, it also holds a more symbolic role. The way that people are questioned and documented at the border affects how they become a part of the society they are entering. Being incorporated into a society does not always mean acceptance. That is, migrants are either seen as permanent or temporary members of the society they are entering. This also comes to define what roles migrants hold when they are incorporated into a society.

What did the researcher do?

The researcher explained how people going through the border are perceived. Some migrants are allowed to settle and eventually become a "permanent" part of Canadian society. For others, they are seen as only "temporary" members. They are not seen as fully incorporated into society. As a result, many migrants are marginalized in a multicultural society.

The "rendering regime" is used by border security to encourage this process. It is a system where various tools collaborate to define the meaning and roles of migrants. These tools include: border practices and logics,

What you need to know:

Border security is used as tool to control who arrives and exits the social space that states encompass. This control is not only physical, but it is also symbolic. That is, state border security attempts to control the agency that migrants have when moving across different borders. As a result, trans-boundary migrants are not always seen as a part of the societies they enter or exit. Border security relies on a set of logics and collected data on migrants that affect how they are incorporated. Alternative methods for migrants to move across borders should be created. Thus, migrants would be able to enfold the various societies they encounter without restrictions.

technologies, and institutions. As a result, these tools play a key role in how people move from one context into another. The rendering regime is a part of how the state's power is represented at the border. Finally, the experience of migrants was defined by the researcher as being a process of "enfoldment". Enfoldment is a process where migrants take their experiences, cultural symbols, institutions and practices they carry. Upon entering a society, they take on the symbols and experiences they encounter and enfold it with their own. Instead of adopting the

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new society's values in place of their own, it becomes a part of their "social horizon". That is, enfoldment involves extending the spaces and symbols that migrants experience and refer to in their lives. Border security plays a critical role in the decision making migrants hold through this process.

What did the researcher find?

For migrants, enfoldment is controlled by border security. As a result, it affects how a society incorporates them. The researcher found that migrants become "trans-boundary" through enfoldment. That is, their "social horizon" is not limited to a single space, but reaches multiple ones. In turn, this challenges the authority that the state assumes. The agency of migrants becomes defined under two positions by the state and border security. Either their agency is temporary, potentially harmful and on the fringes of the society they are entering into; Or to justify their presence, migrants are expected to be permanent and contained members of society.

The researcher sought for a compromise between the security demands of the state and migrants' agency. He proposed "mediated passage" as a solution. Border security could be mediated in a way to honour the decision making of migrants. Migrants should be able to decide how much information they give about themselves at the border. If they were to stay temporarily, the expectations would be minimal compared to how much information they should offer if they plan to stay longer. Alternatively, civil society organizations (CSO's) could act as a mediator between governments and migrants at the border. If CSO's held independent legal status, the state's security demands would not get in the way of enfoldment.

How can you use this research?

Border security is a relevant issue for states and foreign policy. This research shares alternatives for border passage uncommon in a North American context. It also explores how encounters are experienced by migrants at the border. This research describes migrants as "trans-boundary". Thus, it shares insight on migration patterns that are not simply unidirectional, which is a growing reality.

About the Researcher

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