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Migration and Security

Introduction

In this chapter I engage with a relatively new literature that has challenged the increasing tendency both within scholarship and public life more broadly to regard migration as a self-evident security problem. Identifying this literature as critical studies of migration- security, I examine how it poses a series of important questions: under what circumstances, with what effects and at what political and ethical cost does migration come to be framed and governed as a security issue rather than, say, a question of labour or cosmopolitical responsibility? Following a brief discussion of the relationship which critical studies bears to conventional approaches, the chapter observes that at least two strands can be identified within this critical perspective. I distinguish these as discursive and material-semiotic approaches. The chapter offers an assessment of some of the major accomplishments of critical approaches to migration-security. But it argues that, for all its obvious merits, critical scholarship has overlooked important work, both within migration studies and in other areas of the social sciences, work that could considerably enrich its critical project. I highlight three themes where the notion of the securitization of migration could be enhanced by forging closer connections to ongoing work in adjacent fields. These are: historical studies of the policing of mobility; critical studies of race, migration and postcoloniality; and geographies and sociologies that are charting new territories of power and governance.

Critical Studies of Migration-Security

Migration and security: the words seem to run together. They possess a certain mutual affinity and cohabit rather naturally. Like law and order, or peace and stability, they seem to belong together. One only needs to substitute democracy for security to realize this. Somehow the phrase 'migration and democracy' has a dissonant, jarring effect.¹ The terms are less commonly coupled. What possible connection could they have? Not so with

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migration and security. It's almost as though, like the proverbial happy couple, they were made for each other.

Why do migration and security seem to belong together, whether uttered in the context of political speeches by politicians (who would probably speak of im-migration and security), or by scholars and experts in security studies? What accounts for the existence today of this thing I shall be calling the migration–security nexus? One set of responses comes from the intellectual heartland of international relations (e.g. Adamson 2006; Rudolph 2003). Here it is observed that a whole series of elements and transformations have recently combined with the outcome that migration has been rendered as a security issue in a way that it was not before, at least not before the early 1990s. A typical rendering of these transformations would go something like this. Globalization has changed the world. On the one hand it has meshed societies and economies ever closer together on a worldwide basis, set vast flows of investment, goods, ideas and images in circulation at dizzying speeds, and ended forever the possibility that states will function again as containers of their populations. But the global world is also a risky world, scarred with numerous regional instabilities and zones of disorder. With the fall of the Berlin Wall has come an upsurge in interethnic conflicts, civil wars and state implosions. It has generated refugees as well as impoverished persons scouring the world for work; often the two are blurred. Once this is coupled with the fact of the growing ease of movement and communication which globalization creates, it is not hard to see why there has been a dramatic increase in human movement. Globalization has placed the state in a new kind of environment, one in which it is seeking to recruit labour in its bid to remain competitive, but anxious about the kinds of threats that can move amidst these flows. The attacks of 9/11 are then read within this narrative as testament to the ‘dark side’ of globalization. They speak to the possibility that has for some time been debated amongst security experts, namely that this new global world has two faces: a world of benefits and opportunities, but also one that offers all manner of potential for fluid forms of crime, trafficking, drugs and terrorism. All of this has posed a new kind of security challenge for Western states. Read in this light, the migration–security nexus is nothing other than the expression of the state’s response to this new situation, a situation where the gravest threats to the state and its population come not from enemy armies or rival geopolitical blocs but from these new flows, diffuse networks and mobile dangers.

But there is a second line of response to this question of migration-security. This response is far less inclined to accept the presumption that is embodied in the admittedly crude caricature I have just presented. This is the presumption that there is anything inevitable or necessary in the fact that migration has come to be widely perceived and governed as a matter of security. Whereas conventional international relations perceives migration-security as a reaction on the part of states to new situations and threats in their ‘environment’, this second position insists that we are facing not a general phenomenon but a particular social and political construction of migration in which, for complex reasons, migration is represented as a ‘threat’. We are faced with a situation in which a whole series of dangers and fears come to find embodiment in the social figure of the immigrant, the refugee, the human smuggler, etc. By extension, the whole raft of measures now in place to police various spaces, expressions and flows of migration – from biometricized passports to citizenship tests – only appear legitimate once this prior construction of migration is accepted. The problem for this critical perspective is not that identified by conventional approaches, namely how to design better security policies, or how to ‘balance’ security policies with other policy objectives such as free(r) trade and respect for human rights.

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Instead, it is the recognition that the security perspective, deeply institutionalized as it is in this apparatus of control and advanced by innumerable vested interests, actually obstructs and marginalizes the space in which other imaginations and a different politics of migration might take shape. Security policy, in other words, is not the answer but the problem. For it impoverishes

our ability to fashion a society that might actually overcome the debilitating dualisms which plague the present, binaries like us/them, national/foreigner, citizen/ illegal, worker/scrounger, etc.

It is this second line of investigation that interests me in the remainder of this chapter. It is this body of work which, it seems to me, can justly be associated with the idea of ‘new security studies’. But while the above captures the broad outlook of critical approaches to migration-security, there are, it goes without saying, significant differences. For the purposes of exposition I propose to group critical approaches of migration-security into two broad families: discursive perspectives and material-semiotic perspectives. This is not a hard and fast distinction. There is a great deal of work that blurs this boundary, just as certain writers have moved back and forth across what is a permeable and in some ways fuzzy boundary. But for purposes of analysis this is a useful distinction to make. I shall deal first with discursive approaches.

Discursive Approaches

By a discursive approach to migration-security I mean studies which direct our attention to the particular ways in which migration comes to be represented within popular and official discourses, such as political debates and speeches or media frames. Discursive approaches insist that representation is not merely reflective but a set of active, performative, constitutive and productive processes. Hence we need to follow the ways in which ‘immigration’ is figured through representational processes into something dangerous, threatening, alarming and so on. A particularly influential example of this kind of work is provided by Wæver and his colleagues – retrospectively labelled as the ‘Copenhagen School’ – in their theorization of ‘securitization’ (Wæver 1995; Wæver et al. 1993). In this work securitization is modeled as a speech act. Whereas conventional and classical approaches treat security as a given threat that is immanent to the real world, whereas they make the understanding of that threat their central objective, securitization theory insists that it is the act of rendering something as a threat that should be treated as the site of investigation. Security is not a thing, a stable referent, but a practice. It is a way of framing things in ways that usually dramatize an issue and demand that it receives the utmost political priority and attention.

But in addition to Wæver’s notion of speech acts, other theories and methodologies of discourse analysis have been important in studying the securitization of migration. These include Laclau and Mouffe’s analysis of hegemonic formations and signifying chains (Buonfino 2004), Edelman’s notion of symbolic politics (Ceyhan and Tsoukala 2002), and the work of Judith Butler and Homi Bhabha which sees discourse as a site of performativity (Doty 1996). One aspect of securitization is the objectification of the migrant as one who has no political subjectivity. Hence special mention should be made of work that has developed Ranciere’s themes of disagreement and interruption to examine particular situations when the ‘object’ interrupts the security discourse and, through acts of political demonstration, claims a kind of political subjecthood, even a quasi-citizenship (Nyers 2003).

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Discursive approaches reveal that the social construction of migration is actually quite complex. Certainly one sees negative and racialized stereotypes which ‘other’ the migrant, construing them as threats to hallowed institutions of national life, or a drain on scarce space and welfare resources. But there are other instances where the migrant is cast closer to the pole of

victimhood, hence as a violated and often feminized subject who merits certain forms of protection from political authorities. This is especially clear in feminist and post-structuralist research into the discourse of ‘anti-trafficking’ (Andrijasevic 2007; Aradau 2004; Berman 2003). Such research shows how ‘human trafficking’ operates as a gendered site where ‘illegal immigration’, sex and crime are sutured together, and where the state will be performed as a protective, humanitarian agent. One conclusion to be drawn is that a range of contradictory identities circulate within the discursive field of migration: it is hence a field marked by considerable ambivalence (Ceyhan and Tsoukala 2002).

Discursive approaches have contributed many important insights into the phenomenon of migration-security. But if there is one I would single out for special attention it is the observation that it is not only the identity, and consequently the fate of the migrant that is at stake within these representational processes. Equally, it is the very identity of the state and the political community which is being (re)made (Doty 1996). For any controversy about the presence of migrants in a particular society, their impact upon the culture, or about the challenge which migrant flows pose for the state, is invariably an occasion when the meaning and the boundaries of society, culture, sovereignty and much else besides come to be politically defined in particular ways. The ‘us’ is being manufactured at the same time as the ‘them’. Perhaps Huysmans put it best when he observed that: ‘Security policy is a specific policy of mediating belonging’ (2000: 757).

A Material-semiotic Turn?

If discursive approaches were among the first to challenge the hegemony of epistemological realism, and to explore the politics embedded in security practices, they are no longer alone. It is now possible to discern a second wave of research which has also taken up the theme of the securitization of migration. This is what I am calling material-semiotic approaches. I borrow this term from science and technology studies where it is used by scholars who refuse the ontological separation between the ideal and the material, discourses and institutions, and insist on the need to think of regimes and arrangements that are simultaneously material and semiotic (e.g. Law 2007). Taking a material-semiotic approach to migration-security entails that we cannot confine our analyses to the planes of speech, symbolism and language. Representational practice has to be studied in terms of its imbrication within a range of different practices that are not reducible to the linguistic model.

Just what these other practices are, of course, varies quite considerably. In a series of influential papers Bigo has demonstrated the benefits of connecting Foucauldian discourse and governmentality analyses to the kind of field analysis inspired by Bourdieu (Bigo 2001, 2002; see also Huysmans 2006). This means one has to take organizational practices very seriously: in his case the institutional and bureaucratic matrices (media, party politics, security agencies, etc.) within which discourses of in/security are generated. It means we must pay close attention to the dynamics of inter- and intra-agency competition which shape particular strategies and productions of migration as a security domain. Other

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researchers have focused the study of securitization around quite banal technological and technocratic practices operating in specific locales. These include the deployment of particular identification and authentication practices like passports and digital fingerprinting which attempt to fix identity in very material ways (Muller 2004; van der Ploeg 2005); technologies of human

detection like the scanners that are marketed as security ‘solutions’ for the problem of stowaways in shipping containers (Verstraete 2001); the organizational and logistical planning of airport spaces (Salter 2008); and the design of official forms and other inscription devices used to count and differentiate acts of border- crossing (Inda 2006;Walters 2002).

This turn towards the material-semiotic implies not so much a displacement as a broadening and reworking of discursive approaches. This move has enhanced the explanatory power of critical approaches. There are three points to be made in this regard. First, this reconsideration of discourses in relation to the space of institutions and technologies goes some way to explaining the durability of securitized framings of migration. For example, why is it that states persist with the militarization of borders as a ‘solution’ to illegal immigration, despite a great deal of anecdotal and scientific evidence pointing to the ‘failure’ of such policies. It is not just because of the potency and intrinsic threat value of the image of the illegal border-crosser, nor the functionality of illegalized and therefore highly vulnerable subjects to flexibilized regimes of capitalism. A material-semiotic approach would point in addition to the range of professional and bureaucratic actors, but also, for example, makers of surveillance hardware, who have a stake in this regime. As many politicians as much as retailers of detection machinery would no doubt recognize: whole careers can be built on the dual move that with one hand cultivates fear and unease while offering with the other a particular security ‘fix’.

Second, these studies illustrate what we might call the banality of security. Wæver and others have tended to equate securitization with speech acts which dramatize a particular situation and make it a matter of existential survival. Hence, around the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall, there was much talk of massive ‘flows’ of migration from the East which, if they entered the European Union, would threaten the viability of welfare states and perhaps an entire way of life. This equation between securitization and dramatization has, of course, only been strengthened by the events of September 11, and theoretically glossed by the recent appropriation of Agamben’s (1998) sometimes hubristic writing on the theme of sovereign power and bare life. Yet it has to be borne in mind that securitization has a second pole. It is the space where security measures and identities are made operable and normal precisely because they are inserted into daily regimes and routine behaviours, and enacted by a variety of subjects, including social workers, humanitarians, border guards and truck drivers. It is not a case of the banal versus the exceptional, Instead, one needs to observe how both poles interact in the production of security fields.

Finally, this material-semiotic turn alerts us to the plurality of security. As long as the debate remains at the level of the analysis of rhetoric, focused on the social construction of threats, and the deployment of the word ‘security’, we are likely to overlook the fact that there is no such thing as security in general. Instead, what exist are multiple practices which embody quite different meanings and logics of security. This becomes clear when we read laterally across the space of material-semiotic approaches. For instance, a series of studies point to the significant role which technologies of risk management now play in shaping the way security experts interpret and act on the problem of migration control (Amoore 2006; Aradau 2004; van Munster 2005). But contrast this with the way pastoral techniques of control are also evident in the management of migratory processes,

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especially in situations where migrants are placed in detention (Albahari forthcoming; Walters forthcoming), or place themselves in spaces of sanctuary (Lippert 2004). While risk management and pastoralism can certainly be combined in certain contexts, it is important to note that security

is being imagined and enacted in different ways in different situations. Attending to such differences is important since it challenges the tendency to ontologize security. It should be clear by now that critical studies of migration-security have not been content to merely criticize conventional approaches for their narrowness, or for their essentialization of security, statehood and much else besides. The strength of this work is that it has got on with the job of exploring, both theoretically and empirically, how different facets of migration are structured as questions of security. That said, it seems to me there are certain blindspots within the critical literature. In the remainder of this chapter I set out three areas where further research concerning the migration–security nexus could make significant advances. Of course, any such itemization is somewhat arbitrary. My claim is not that these themes will complete the bigger picture, or that they are tightly connected. But they are linked by at least one thing. In each case it is not a matter of developing a research agenda from scratch with an entirely new set of concepts. Instead, each theme represents a space of work that is already in certain respects well under way. Yet it is under way in fields and areas that seem to be, thus far at least, quite remote from scholarship in the area of security studies. Hence my remarks should be interpreted as a call for greater dialogue and connection with ongoing research at the edges of critical security studies.

The Mobilization of Security

What might critical studies of migration-security learn from the history of policing mobility? Quite early in his recently translated lectures on ‘security, territory, population’, Foucault uses the problem of towns to illustrate certain historical transformations related to the emergence of a modern conception of security. He notes how it was that surveillance became an issue in new ways for the typical European town during the eighteenth century. This was related to the fact that city walls were being suppressed to make way for economic development, to foster a greater circulation of goods and people between the town and the outlying countryside. But this meant in turn that it was no longer possible to close the town in the evenings or closely supervise ‘daily comings and goings’. Motivated largely by economic considerations, the suppression of town walls created a situation in which ‘the insecurity of the towns was increased by an influx of the floating population of beggars, vagrants, delinquents, criminals, thieves, murderers, and so on, who might come, as everyone knows, from the country’ (Foucault 2007: 18).

Foucault’s remark is interesting not least because it alerts us to the existence of a very long and complex history in which the question of how to police the mobility of population, and how to reconcile or adjust such mobilities to norms of settlement and sedentary life, has been posed. Certainly this theme of a dual movement that combines the removal of city walls with enhanced surveillance over perceived problems of vagrancy and crime powerfully anticipates current debates about border control under conditions of globalization. Indeed, there is surely a line one could draw between the remaking of towns in the period Foucault discusses, and the remaking of European space under the auspices of the Schengen agreement.

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Historians of vagrancy, roguery and poor laws have carefully documented many of the ways in which the emerging states of the modern period sought to domesticate and pacify their interiors (Beier 1985; Feldman 2003; Lucassen 1997; Procacci 1991). Yet this rich history of the policing of mobility, and its relationship to later practices of security and surveillance, has been largely overlooked both by mainstream studies of migration-security, but also by critical research

into security and policing. Perhaps it has been neglected because security studies has been somewhat presentist in its outlook. Drawn to pressing crises in the here and now it has rarely found the time for historical reflection. Perhaps it has been overlooked because the policing of towns, countrysides and highways has been deemed ‘domestic’ to the state, and therefore only peripheral to a field which has assumed the domain of the ‘international’ to be its proper space of inquiry. Whatever the reason, it is surely the case that our accounts of the migration–security nexus would be enriched by connecting them more fully to this history. It may well be true that migration has only recently been named as a ‘security’ issue. But the policing of mobility has a much older pedigree that most certainly does inform our current situation.

But Foucault’s remark is interesting not just because it hints at an important but hitherto neglected historical field. It is also interesting because of the kinds of questions it opens up regarding the very meaning of security. As Foucault will explore at some length in these lectures, the idea of security he finds emerging in the eighteenth century – an idea he will come to associate closely with ‘governmentality’ as the lectures proceed – has an intrinsic and not merely incidental relationship to questions of mobility and circulation. Foucault develops this point by contrasting security and discipline as approaches to government. If discipline imagined an ideal state where everything – people, goods, places, etc. – could be accorded its rightful place, security abandons the dream of a fixed order. As Agamben (2002) notes, it is much closer to the idea of managing disorder. For security, as Foucault understands the term, is a way of governing which does not presume a stable terrain with fixed co-ordinates, but a world of flux and contradiction. It is a world of probabilities and risk. Put differently, movement, understood in its broadest sense, is immanent to modern ideas of security. For this reason we might say that a Foucauldian approach to security implies the mobilization of security.

To reiterate an earlier point, there exist multiple meanings and corresponding practices of security. Neocleous observes that the English word ‘security’ derives from the Latin *securitas/securus*. ‘As an explicitly political concept *securitas* became prominent with the motto *securitas publica* – the safety or defence of empire’ (Neocleous 2000: 9). This idea of security was to be embodied in the Peace of Westphalia. When certain US strategists coined the term ‘national security’ in 1945, an idea that would lie at the very heart of international relations as a discipline, it was this idea of security as the safety of the state that was being adapted and revived (Neocleous 2000: 9).

While any further elaboration of the kind of genealogy of security which Neocleous and others have undertaken would be beyond the scope of this chapter, this reflection on the multiple sources of the idea of security is pertinent to our discussion for the following reason. It suggests, I think, that what currently gets placed under the heading of ‘the securitization of migration’ actually involves the intersection of at least two currents within the history of security. As any attention to the long history of the policing of mobility suggests, our own time is not the first to see human movement as raising concerns about security. What is perhaps more novel about the present is the fact that political concerns and programmes concerning the policing of mobility have come to be overcoded by security as *securitas*. In other words, the securitization of migration is in actual fact a doubling of

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security. It marks the point where the series circulation–population–security and state– security overlap and resonate, producing complex effects that are still far from clear.

Migration, Security, Postcoloniality

It should come as no surprise that in the sizeable body of work which has examined the politics and sociology of recent immigration in Western societies, questions of race and post-coloniality occupy a prominent if not always central place (e.g. Layton Henry 1992; Wrench and Solomos 1993). To date, debates about the securitization of migration have made surprisingly little connection with this work. But again, some kind of dialogue would be fruitful. In the decades following the Second World War, 'immigration' marked a complex socio-political site where a series of racial dynamics were to play out. This period saw on the one hand the withering within official state politics of the kinds of biological and supremacist conceptions of race which had underpinned not only the genocidal project of the Nazi regime but, in a somewhat different form, the colonial projects of most of the major European powers. The discrediting of the biological idea of race most certainly did not signal the disappearance of race as an element within politics or even as a category within administration. Against the backdrop of new flows of migration, this time moving from the newly independent ex-colonies to the metropolises and as such reversing the predominant direction which obtained before decolonization, the post-war period saw the crystallization of new forms of racism. These were racisms founded less in biology and more in assertions and assumptions about the fundamental incommensurability of certain 'cultures' and 'peoples' (Barker 1981) – positions which Balibar likens to a 'racism without races' (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991).

This racism without races often expressed itself, at least in its more public iterations, through a series of political codewords – 'immigrant', 'inner city', 'banlieu', or in the USA, 'urban problem'. But it goes without saying that this new racism was much more than a play of rhetoric. If a range of societal fears would cathect themselves around 'immigration', these fears were to find their institutional correlates within a whole series of governmental programmes and schemes focused upon the 'problem' of immigration. Duffield (2006) describes the administrative complex that would take shape in the British case, comprising a 'race relations industry' focused on the 'cohesion' and 'integration' of the national community, an overseas 'aid industry' tasked with the 'development' of decolonized regions, and a system of migration 'control'. The fundamental premise was that immigration was something risky that required careful management.

The political codewords may have changed – witness how it is not so much the immigrant but the 'illegal immigrant', 'asylum seeker' and 'terrorist' who now constitute the terrain of suspicion (Fekete 2001) or how talk of 'civilizations' now refigures the geopolitical imagination – but many of the basic features of this arrangement remain in place. For instance, the contemporary reassertion of a new civics and the fashion for citizenship tests are some of the more recent ways in which migration is marked as a site of racialized difference. Critical studies of migration-security have not made as much connection with themes of race and post-coloniality as they might. As such, they have not adequately asked whether and how 'security' itself might now function as a site of racism without races. There are, of course, important exceptions (Ibrahim 2005), but in many of the attempts to theorize the

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securitization of migration, race is only accorded an incidental and not a theoretical status. The point is not, of course, that theorists of the securitization of migration fail to recognize that the various ways in which migrant communities might be negatively stereotyped, denigrated and alienated have a strong racial component. Nor is it that they have failed to note how antiterrorist

measures unleashed in the wake of September 11 circle closely around Arab and Muslim communities (Cainkar 2004). My point here is somewhat different. It is that a fuller understanding of the security–migration nexus requires us to explore some of the less immediately visible, but much more subtle and enduring ways in which this space is marked out, subtended by and vitalized by colonial and post-colonial logics. And here I should stress that I understand the colonial and the post-colonial not as successive stages but, following Akhil Gupta, ‘heterogeneous temporalities that mingle and jostle with one another to interrupt the teleological narratives that have served both to constitute and the stabilize the identity of “the West”’ (cited in Gregory 2004: 7). The point is that the ways in which we imagine security, write its history, record its development, assess its costs and benefits, are much more profoundly shaped by colonial and post-colonial power relations and identities than is often acknowledged. One example should make this abundantly clear. It has become a truism of writing on the theme of security and migration that ‘9/11’ was a fundamental turning point. As commentators never tire of reminding us, the world changed that day. At one level this is of course absolutely true. The field of migration control, and more broadly the regulation of mobility, has changed quite dramatically. The war on terror has yielded unprecedented degrees of unease, surveillance, inspection and detention targeted at mobile populations. It has spawned gargantuan administrative agencies like the Department of Homeland Security, and everywhere accelerated and thickened international policing networks, to highlight just a few of its effects (De Genova 2007; Tirman 2004).

But as grotesque and dreadful as the mass murders of September 11 certainly were, and however profoundly the response to this event has reshaped the security world, there is a danger in blindly reproducing the line that we now inhabit a ‘post-9/11 security environment’. September 11 was an exceptional event in all sorts of ways. But then so was Bhopal. Yet Western scholarship does not temporalize the present by reference to a post-Bhopal world. On a global scale, mass murder and mass suffering are not exceptional but somewhat normal. It is just that most lives and deaths are not marked, not remembered, in quite the same way. One thing 9/11 makes painfully clear is that a hierarchy of value continues to define the worth of human life on a planetary scale. It is not the same hierarchy as that which underpinned modern colonialism. But many of its most tangible expressions and outcomes are eerily similar. Consider, for instance, how every death of the ‘coalition’ troops occurring in the ongoing occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan is solemnly counted, and painfully remembered within media and state contexts. Compare this with the faceless, nameless, invisible and ignoble deaths suffered by most of those caught up on ‘the other side’ of these wars of occupation. Or compare it with the anonymity of death which befalls those thousands of migrants who drown in the Mediterranean and Atlantic, making desperate bids to evade detection in the EU’s ‘fight against illegal immigration’ in order to reach European shores.

This is not to suggest that we should forget September 11. Nothing could be further from the point. It is to suggest instead that those deaths need to be remembered in a different way, one that, as Paul Gilroy has suggested, challenges ‘the nationalist appropriation of the events’ and ‘remembers the dead on a different scale’. This would be a scale and a sensibility in which ‘that [particular] injustice is required to be seen, felt and understood

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in the context of other similar and connected horrors that are more frequent, and less eventful, in other parts of the world’ (Gilroy 2002).

All of this is to say that the very act of temporalizing and qualifying security in terms like

‘September 11’ can never be innocent or neutral. Logics of race and colonialism run deep, deep enough that they imbue the very narratives and categories that we commonly use to think the present.

New Territories of Power

My final case for broadening and deepening critical studies of migration-security concerns the theme of political transformation. It is, of course, a long-standing theme in the social sciences that in migration we find a force that is reshaping societies and cultures, challenging national, regional and other identities, and both undermining and generating new models of citizenship and belonging (Joppke 1999; Soysal 1994). But far less has been written about migration as a phenomenon around which we might observe a reshaping of state apparatuses and other machineries of rule. Compare international migration with global finance. The latter is deemed a weighty force, significant enough that it has compelled even the most powerful state actors on the world scene, albeit in complex and mediated ways, to reshape their very structures and operational logics. But the same is not usually said of migration. It is said to reshape identities, cultures and populations. But rarely is migration considered a phenomenon that transforms the very administrative structure or political logic of states, or even less the architecture of international order (but see Hollifield 2004). Migration is cast as altogether weaker.² But this picture is beginning to change. One important point that can be drawn from many studies of the securitization of migration – and especially from semiotic-material approaches – is that the migration–security nexus needs to be understood not only as the product of state activity, but as a site of state and governmental transformation in its own right (Berman 2003; Doty 1996). Put differently, we are not dealing here with a situation in which states engage in security practices, changing the meaning and experience of migration, while remaining themselves unchanged. On the contrary, the state itself is also being remade through its encounter with securitization. Just how it is remade depends very much on its insertion within the geopolitics of migration control (Samers 2004) and antiterrorism; whether, for instance, it is politically coded as a ‘state of destination’, of ‘transit’, of ‘origin’ or, perhaps, a ‘failed state’. It goes without saying that the implications of securitization are very different for Germany or Britain compared with Morocco or Pakistan. But transformations are evident in each.

This theme of migration-security as a site of state transformation is present in the literature in several ways. State transformation is evident in all those instances where new statuses, linked to new forms of administration of migrants are being produced and put into service. For instance, in his discussion of the new ‘homeland security state’, de Genova (2007) examines the implications of a shift from the concept of ‘illegal alien’ to ‘enemy alien’. State transformation is also there as a subtext in research that has developed the theme of the ‘rebordering’ of states and world-regions (Andreas and Biersteker 2003; Andreas and Snyder 2000). These studies suggest that, contrary to the prediction of a coming ‘borderless world’, the territorial state and the performance of sovereignty are alive and well, albeit if the borders do take new forms. And perhaps most interestingly, state transformation applies in the case of a range of studies which examine borders as the setting for new kinds

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of spaces and temporalities. Political geographers have been especially attuned to the fact that within contemporary strategies of migration and refugee deterrence we are seeing an alarming proliferation of territorial excisions, non-places and grey zones at borders (Davidson 2003; Lloyd

2002). Whether located in airports or on remote islands, these new spaces challenge norms of accountability and transparency and short-circuit the possibility of claiming asylum or seeking protection under various international rights protocols.

Ultimately, however, we can observe that research into the migration–security nexus would probably be limited in its understanding if it confined its conceptual language to that of state transformation. For clearly we are dealing not simply with transformations in the state, but the emergence of new territories of power that, while they may have states and their agencies as key nodes, are not really reducible to the old political maps of the international order. To take one example, consider the current turn towards biometric technology as a ‘solution’ for certain problems of surveilling, profiling and authenticating mobile populations. Certainly we could read the biometric as the latest development in a long line of instruments used by states to enhance the legibility of ‘their’ populations, a line that would include the passport (Salter 2003) but also, if we traced it back far enough, the political-administrative requirement that each of the sovereign’s subjects possess a surname (Scott 1998). Yet the biometric is not simply an instrument wielded by state agencies. It is also the site of a burgeoning, multi-billion dollar techno-industry (Didier 2004). The biometric is taking shape in the midst of complex networks that include research laboratories, regulations and standards agencies, venture capitalists and investment consultants, and transnational corporations like Motorola, Sagem and Accenture. All of this is, in turn, unfolding around the search for new markets, markets which range from the development of entry and exit controls as part of the mandate of Homeland Security, to various local and national police and immigration agencies in countries like Croatia and Cyprus. In the latter cases, the quest to become fit to join the European Union, and participate in its intelligence networks, entails the purchase and implementation of new systems of biometric control and data-sharing. In the presence of dynamics like these, the old boundaries between public goods and private commodities, state and market, national and international, become blurred and complicated. One task of empirical research becomes that of tracing how such elements are being reassembled in new ways at different sites.

The challenge of mapping these new territories and configurations of power requires the invention of new methods and concepts. This point has not been lost on a number of writers who, working on themes of migration-security, have made the development of new concepts a matter of urgency. Whether one is talking of Bigo’s idea of a ‘möbius ribbon’ that folds internal and external security into one another (Bigo 2001), or a series of studies which have found the Deleuzian idea of ‘assemblage’ useful for thinking irregularly shaped control systems and rhizomatic dynamics (Ong and Collier 2005), it is clear that the work of mapping new spaces is now being taken up, if not as extensively as it might.

But if there is one point that merits emphasizing in summing up this discussion of the migration–security nexus as a site of new territories of power, it is this: we should be cautious about placing these diverse new practices, sites and processes under the catch-all heading of ‘globalization’. This is not to deny that recent studies of the ‘globalization of migration control’ (Duvell 2003), the ‘globalization of enclosure’ (Coward 2005), and ‘global mobility regimes’ (Shamir 2005) have produced very valuable and important insights. Nevertheless, there is perhaps something to be said for a more nominalist and less dramatized approach. Here it may well prove useful to follow the lead of those like

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Sassen who writes of ‘third spaces’ (Sassen 2008) or Barry who theorizes ‘technological zones’ (Barry 2006). Both offer us concepts to map processes that do indeed escape and transcend

international systems of regulation – but do so without being properly global either. Whether we want to understand the biometricization of the policing of mobility and migration, the network of readmission agreements and practices which is giving rise to new geographies of expulsion in and from Europe, or many of the other perplexing phenomena that might be placed under the heading of migration-security, the chances are we will encounter emergent networks that, if they share nothing else, have in common this matter of being neither national nor global.

Notes

¹ But for a study which insists on the integral and constitutive role which migration has played in the vitalization of democratic life see Honig (2001).

² One exception is the literature which sees global migration as a movement that ‘erodes’ the sovereignty of states. But here change is modeled only as something negative – a subtraction from the (imagined) past of a fully sovereign state.

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