

## Chapter 27

# The Dilemmas of Control: Rights, Walls and Identities in State Policies to International Migration

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**Abstract** Throughout the last decade, the search for more efficient and selective policies to control migratory flows has led to the development of new forms of intervention which make up what has denominated a new political design in the area of migration control. In this article, we have described the challenges that international migrations pose to the classic understanding of sovereignty, interstate relations and state territorial boundaries and human rights. The new political architecture of migration control has underscored the growing discrepancy between political jurisdiction and action and has evolved to a more selective practice where borders, internal control and immigrant's qualifications have acquired a remarkable role in the admission process.

International migration may be considered to be one of the social phenomena that has given rise to the greatest interest and academic debate within the social sciences in the last few decades. In addition to the worries about its economic and demographic effects, the view of immigration as a process that profoundly influences the conformation of political dilemmas is now seen as an additional consideration. The contradictions which arise in the management and governing of immigration are rooted in the existence of an unequal model of supply and demand migration, as well as the imbalance between the acknowledgment of an emigratory freedom by liberal States, with international law, and the endorsement of the right to migrate and the sovereignty of the immigration target countries.

The political dilemmas that are brought about by international migrations have a very wide-ranging reach. These contradictions take centre stage in the receptor country's attempts to formulate immigration policy where unilateral regulation is intended, and in the conditions of entering an establishment, or of receiving personal rights, such as the possibility of access to a political community by means of the

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politics of nationality. These policies additionally regulate the framework in which the integration of immigrants is effected and liberal rights are recognized, through the execution of public policies and administrative measures which facilitate access to services and political community, the permeability of the institutions and national agencies; and the social participation of the recently arrived immigrants, the immigrants who have put down roots, and the descendents of those who were immigrants.

At the same time that the debate about justice and migration has become centered in the political philosophy of the ethical dilemmas which give origin to territorial access and political membership, sociology has centered its efforts on the description and interpretation of the phenomenon where, with comparative perspectives, distinct models of state response have been formed to respond to immigration. From this perspective, migrational politics is a sphere of public intervention which is undergoing continuous change; where it is common to see a plethora of diverse interests in common flow and where contrary views, actor networks and determinate understandings become concentrated over the issue of national identity.

Studies have been carried out on the challenges that international migrations pose to the classic understanding of sovereignty, inter-state relations and state territorial boundaries. The new political architecture of migration control has underscored, for example, the growing discrepancy between political jurisdiction and action. International migrations also seem to limit the capacity and autonomy of state actors, which have sought political agreements and alliances to manage immigration more effectively.

Both perspectives, however, make reference to common aspects. What are the conditions of eligibility for the immigrant candidates and where are they devised? How do the policies take form in reference to the number and characteristics of immigrants? Lastly, as an attempt to mention some of the most commonly mentioned aspects, how are these reflected in the construction of the politics of control and the regulation of migratory flows? Both disciplines, indeed, have as their intention a response to two seminal questions: Who has the right to enter and establish herself and what are the rights of this individual once she has been given the right to establish?

## **27.1 The Right of Entry and Settlement: Selection by Origin**

Frontiers have always been an instrument of migrant control and selection. Throughout the nineteenth century, diverse laws were passed so as to forbid the entry of prisoners, the poor, carriers of infectious diseases and, even, of slaves given their freedom. In the later construction of the politics of selective access, two principles in dispute were shed out as a result. An initial option mediated for the carrying out of a more universal and equalitarian selection based upon personal criteria (physical and moral conditions and qualification). Whereas, the second, was an ethnic selection based on national origins.

The ethnic selection focus gained force in many of the classic receptor countries for immigration during the last decades of the nineteenth century and officially dominated political decision making during the first half of the twentieth century (Neuman 1996; Weil 2001). For many years, migrants, whose origins were from Asiatic countries, Southern Europe, the Caribbean, and countries where slavery had been practiced, were prohibited or severely restricted as a result of the political influence of national movements and social understandings about the unassimilatory character of certain types of immigrants.

As Zolberg has indicated, the greater part of the modern nation states have arrived at the position of being perceived by their members almost like family structures based on ancestral links subject to a common destiny (Zolberg 1999). For this reason, the entry of certain nationalities and migrants was prohibited and strictly controlled. As Joppke demonstrates, the intrinsic inclination of the national status quo to select the immigrants as they arrive may be explained by criteria of cultural proximity. The result of this is what he has classified as ethnic immigration (Joppke 2005). The definition of the “desirable” and “undesirable” immigrants has not been, however, a static one, but, rather, has evolved over the course of many years. The selection of immigrants looked, during many decades, as the making of “white” nations, by means of which the recruiting of Europeans was promoted, particularly from Central and Northern Europe (López-Sala 2005a; Drieger and Halli 2000).

However, the need for human labor by the American and European economies allowed for, during the 1960s, the expansion of what was considered immigration of the adequate, and, especially, those coming from the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe and, later, those from Latin America and Asia. This process has been described by Joppke, in the case of Western societies, as a period of transition from forms of ethnic selection to a more universal form of selection in which ethnic criteria has been diffused and where it seems that, with the culture of a defense of human rights, which arose prior to the Second World War, and with the decolonization process, this process has taken on an important role in these countries. It cannot be stated, however, that these ethnic criteria have altogether disappeared. The policies that regulate migratory flows have been converted into a sphere of ambivalent intervention with regards to the grounds of natural selection of migrants. The growing cultural diversity of the new and old receptor societies has unleashed all kind of worries amongst the population and with some leaders of public opinion and political parties. There are many who hold the opinion that the presence of foreigners and the formation of ethnic minorities could, in the end, transform national identity and the cultural idiosyncrasy of the receptor countries, thus undermining the very democracy of these nations through supporting a political culture that goes against the principles derived from this liberalism. The perception of migration as a threat, in terms of national and “societal security”, have brought about issues linked to identifying with a political community and belonging to a culture, in which a recurring discourse on the limits and possibilities of diversity and political loyalty appear.

For the moment, it would be far too risky to state that policies of immigration have recuperated the selective racial tones that characterized them in the beginning

(Gabaccia 1999). However, there exist many indications that reveal a promotion, through measures of an administrative nature, of the entry and establishment of certain categories of foreigners considered to be more apt to effectively integrate into the receptor societies, which is considered through considerations such as language or religion. The controversial political debates around “integration contract” which would oblige foreigners seeking to live in Europe to avow certain values, such as freedom of speech and equal rights for women, show the acute sensitivity of ethnic and religious issues in the management of migration and minorities nowadays.

The declarations of political spokespersons and religious leaders in Spain and Italy, showing a marked favoritism towards the arrival of Catholic believers as opposed to those of other faiths, as well as the debate over Christian identity, that accompanied the redaction of the much discussed European constitution, showing the extension and taking root of this “sensitive selection.” The politics of the acquisition of nationality through residence, which in course allows for a privileged access to citizenship for certain nationalities, is another good example of the creation of “desirable” immigration categories within immigration regulation. In the case of Spain, for example, the view has been held that, since the last decade, there has been a policy practice that promoted the arrival and establishment of Latin Americans and East Europeans, to the detriment of the flows of immigrants coming from Morocco, from which has been coined the denomination of Hispanics as the “preferred immigrants” (Izquierdo et al. 2002). The policy that exists concerning Spanish nationality also allows for the application of Spanish citizenship for those coming from Latin American countries after 2 years of residence in Spain, as opposed to the 10 years of stay which is the general requisite.

National, ethnic, and religious selection is maintained with great strength in the cases of the other important receptor states, such as the countries of the Persian Gulf, Israel and Japan (Douglass and Roberts 2000; Goodman et al. 2003; Miyoshi 2003). Migratory politics continue to determine, to a great extent the quantity and composition of the candidates for successful migration, which we have described as the eligibility conditions of migrants. However, the qualitative dimension of immigration combines with quantitative selection, which, since the 1970’s, has given significant weight to the policies of immigration control and border control (López-Sala 2005a, b).

## 27.2 Migration and Borders

The transformations of the last decades have reduced the economic and military importance of the borders of the Western states. For this reason, it can be positively stated that border control of international migrants is the most significant exception in the general process of the liberalization of the economy. Within the analysis of globalization, state control of human mobility appears as a deviation from the

impulse of the processes of transnationalism and the underlying logic of the movement. Far from disappearing, as indicated Andreas, many border controls have taken on a new meaning, a new approach through which ambitious and innovative efforts of the States to regulate the international movement of people are being practiced (Andreas 2000).

In addition to the influential “gap” and “convergence” theses formulated by Cornelius, Martin and Hollifield in the 1990s, a new set of analyses have emerged that focus on describing the new mechanisms and characteristics of political intervention and how they are linked to security and economy aims, as well as the growing network of private and public actors and varying levels of government, each with their own interests, which participate in the decision making process and management of these policies (Andreas 2003; Bigo 2001). Of particular interest are contributions highlighting the expansion and deterritorialization of migration control and surveillance, which now extend beyond the geographic limits of destination countries (Zolberg 2003; Lahav and Guiraudon 2006; López-Sala 2010). The outward expansion of control defines a new *locus* for control which breaks the traditional link between territory and political jurisdiction. Other analyses outline the inward expansion of control in destination countries, which includes, among other mechanisms, increased surveillance of foreign residents and state intrusion into the private lives of migrants and citizens. Externalization, bilateralism, cooperation and technologization are some of the other aspects of the intervention carried out through sometimes problematic joint management with diverse countries and levels of government (López-Sala 2009, 2010).

This new *locus* of control defies the traditional identification of sovereignty with territory and can be seen as an outward expansion of migration control policy, which now extends from origin countries, to transit countries, incorporating actions on the border and finally penetrating the territory of destination countries. Externalization of dissuasion, in transit and origin countries, has been combined with forms of ‘repressive dissuasion’ in destination countries. Internal control within destination countries now includes biometric databases, increased police raids and the “investigation” of mixed marriages. However, the most common forms of ‘repressive dissuasion’ have been expulsions, detentions and internment of foreigners in irregular situations (see López-Sala 2010, 2011).

Despite the analogy of action and consensus which exists within the administrations and public opinion about the necessity for controlling the flow of immigrants, ethnic associations and human rights defenders call for the development of formulas which may permit legal channels for the entry and establishment of immigrants, as well as for special measures which facilitate the reunion of families and the protection of refugees and young immigrants.

The entry of refugees and their family members has provoked the theorizing of a need for the moral defense of specific channels for the establishment of these in the target country (Adelman 1995; Carens 1996; Weiner 1996). The element of discourse resides in society’s pointing out that it is important to uphold a cautious approach, with the idea that the reinforcement of border controls cannot be carried out at the expense of fundamental human rights (Jacobson and Benarieh 2003).

One line of argument that runs parallel to this one has arisen in the field of philosophy, which holds that the principle of justice establishes the legally legitimate parameters of political practice. The contributions, even if up to date, are still rather scarce and underline the fact that the development of a theory of justice that incorporates the problem of immigration has to base itself in the principle of equality and non-discrimination by means of race and economic variables (Carens 1996, 1997, 2002; Ingram 2002), which, to a great extent, have more or less shaped state response up to now.

The development of a complex politics of control is accompanied by evidence of the growing difficulty of governments to successfully intervene in the processes of regulation and vigilance of frontiers. Indeed, one of the most influential essays of recent times about this topic projects its argument precisely upon these two aspects in its characterization of the present day state of migratory control (Cornelius et al. 1995, 2004). This piece of work, on the one hand, puts forward the thesis of convergence by which it purports that there is an increasing existence of similarities among the policies of migration flows employed among the most industrialized countries, which has resulted in the disappearance of traditional differences between the classic receptor countries and the new receptor states. The thesis of imbalance indicates that the distance between the objectives of the policies of control and their results is great and growing. This has provoked a climate of hostility due to its opinion on immigration and the growing pressure exerted over governments so that they adopt even more restrictive measures.

However, the receptor countries have rarely put into operation these policies of “zero” immigration. For this reason, since the 1990s, it is more accurate to talk of the implantation of a series of restrictive and conditional access measures whereby the entry and establishment of a certain type of immigrant has been impeded and for which serious impediments have been constructed so as to restrict other types of immigration flow (Massey and Durand 2003).

Migratory policies have created categories of migrants, not only in the process of access, but also in the phase of installation and establishment. Indeed, there exists today a certain agreement amongst specialists who hold to a political discourse that states that the politics of zero immigration has been a fallacy and that visas have been maintained open, permitting the entry of family members and workers in an explicit and open way so as to placate the necessities of the national labor markets. Furthermore, from this stance, many authors have purported the thesis of the ambivalence of the receptor states with regard to an irregular immigration framework (Cornelius 2000).

## **27.3 From Immigration Controls to Welfare Controls**

The fight against informal immigration can also be found among the national migration control policies, and in the agenda of the process of European convergence on the subjects of immigration and asylum. Public unrest towards irregularities in

immigration has inspired a great number of initiatives, including the 'fortressing' of frontiers, an increase in personnel for operations of patrolling, and the creation of special bodies within administration and the police. The employment of military technology in customs and border vigilance has provoked many authors to talk of a state of alarm, migratory exceptions and the militarization of border areas. This is, indeed, the case with the measures approved for the border between Mexico and the United States throughout the 1990s, with the adoption of the slogan "prevention through deterrence" and of operations such as Blockade in El Paso, Texas or Gatekeeper at the San Diego /Tijuana border areas. The experience of control in these border lands has, in recent times, inspired the control of Europe's southern border with the Mediterranean in operations such as RIO and Ulises, with the fortressing of the perimeter fences of the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla, as well as the installation of the System of External Vigilance known more popularly as SIVE. These types of measures, regardless of the fact that doubt has been cast as to whether they produce effective results, have, according to Aleinikoff, been used to assure the symbolic integrity of the border, generating a seductive image of state control and reinforcing the myth that the way to tackle the problem of informal immigration is to be found in border based action. However, at the same time, the difficult reality of the existence of a transnational informal labor market is obscured by this reality (Aleinikoff 2002; Andreas 1998, 2000).

Informal immigration and asylum seekers are not only a key piece in the puzzle of the conformation of the politics of migration, but they also have been profoundly stigmatized in Europe since the 1980s. Both collectives have been targeted by a segment of the population and by some populist political formations as the reason for causes of unemployment, pressure on state recourses in the welfare state, and increasing criminality at large and antisocial behavior. It is from this stance that measures are being combined into a double action: the preventative and the repressive. International migrations, also illegal, are considered to be intrinsic to and symptomatic of the globalization process and of the transnational flow of goods, services and ideas.

The mobility of the labor force is a key element in the world's productive economy, but, within a national community, the welfare economy is constructed on a particular distribution of the resources among the members of this closed community. It is because of this that there is the popular voicing of arguments in defense of the establishment of restrictive policies for territorial access and to the national community by using the metaphor of the club (Walzer 1983).

The emergence of the discourse on the control and fight against irregular immigration in migratory politics has stirred up an agitated academic debate around the indirect effects of this frontier and interior rigor. Basically, there are three points around which the debate circulates in the sociological literature. The first asks what are the effects of this political objective in the enjoyment of personal rights, in the conservation of fundamental human rights and in the right to not be discriminated against; the second concerns the juridical and social construction of an "informal immigration" or, as it appears in the literature, a process of "illegalization" of these immigrants whereby there are implications for the processes of social integration

and the displacement of informal immigrants to the bottom of the social pyramid; and the last considers the dilemma produced by informal immigration through trying to reconcile a process of inclusion in the informal labor market with, at the same time, a civic exclusion that implies forms of restriction in the access to political and social membership.

Other types of migratory regulation have intended, in the words of the political leaders, to contain the effect of attraction that the systems of welfare state produce in the migratory candidates. The argument that this system is breaking down as a consequence of the pressure exercised by immigrants has resulted in legal reforms that have now seriously limited access, especially for illegal immigration, to the provision of public and social services (Hammar 1999). The argument for maintaining the welfare state has been used in order to support certain types of migratory flow, especially highly qualified young workers. On the contrary, the proposal for the limitation of available public resources has been employed to justify measures that impede the undesired migratory flows. Geddes has summarized this perfectly in a recent article where he explains the links between migration and the welfare state in the construction of public policy. Geddes indicates that there appears to be pressure to more rigorously demarcate the community of legitimate receptors of public benefits and, from this, to establish measures for those subject to forms of migration that are considered abusive or counterproductive to the general public interests, while, at the same time, migratory currents that are considered beneficial to the receptor countries are promoted in a general sense (Geddes 2003). The result is a selection that determines the environment of those chosen to be able to establish themselves by criteria such as the capacity for investment, artistic talent, or professional skill.

## 27.4 Immigration and Human Rights

In the past decades, an extensive international doctrine has been developed whose purpose is the protection of refugees and immigrant workers. The respect for and defense of the rights of foreign workers has activated a vociferous and controversial academic debate on the sociology of migration, particularly since the publication in the mid-nineties of Soysal's *Limits of Citizenship*. Soysal's central thesis is that the immigration experience in Europe shows that national citizenship has been substituted by a more universal notion of membership that is based more on a notion of individual rights than on territorial connections (Soysal 1994). In agreement with this model, universal human rights, recognized through international law and through numerous conventions, substitutes national rights and the individual transcends the citizen. This certainly shows the appearance of a new form of belonging, the post-national, whereby rights are localized external to the nation state. Along these lines can be found another thesis, such as those defended by Joppke or Morris, which sustains that the attribution of rights to migrants in the international arena is a manifestation of the appearance of a new type of *cosmopolitan* citizenship.

The protection that emanates from international law extends to the whole of the population without distinguishing between nationals and foreigners, even if, in the case of illegal immigrants, they may have violated the entry and residence conditions of the country to which they have taken up residence. The action exercised by the courts of justice in the receptor countries also allows for certain rights to be given to foreigners in transit and to those who have been established at the margins of their legal state, as remarked upon by Guiraudon. The real impact of these instruments, as many authors claim, is not as effective as it would first seem, because, in reality, its application is counter arrested by the migratory policies in effect in the receptor countries. The tensions and vulnerability of fundamental human rights appear to be especially so in the treatment of informal immigrants when they are inside the territory of the receptor country, within the frontier lands, in the territorial waters, in the duty of emergency rescue (as is the case of sinking vessels or the rescuing of migrants from the desert lands between Mexico and the United States or between Morocco and the city of Melilla), in the execution of sanctioning policies, in the concessions of the granting of asylum, and in the measures directed at illegal young immigrants who come to a country unaccompanied. The ability to benefit from universal human rights, in the case of immigrants, is found to be limited in its projection because of the confrontation between the principle of protection and the control of migrational flows, and, as has become explicit in recent years, between the principle of national security and citizen protection. The emphasis on protecting citizens and providing them security has become the starting point for the insecurity of foreigners, leading to a significant contradiction between the protection of citizens and foreigners (Bigo 2000).

## **27.5 New Forms of Selection of Immigrant Workers: The Growing Weight of Their Credentials**

The appearance of new international economic tendencies, the transformation of the national labour markets and of the demographic structure have marked an urgency to design new models of admission that may break, to a certain degree, the myth over the politics of “zero” migration. This demand is especially centered upon active policies that would permit the recruitment of highly qualified workers as well as temporary and permanent labor in order to cover vacancies in certain labor niches; especially in the service sector, catering, and agriculture in Southern European countries and the United States and in the health care system and education in European countries with a tradition of receiving immigrants, such as Great Britain or Germany. The demographic argument linked to the ageing of the population and the breaking up of the pension system has given substantial added weight to the debate, in particular, the controversial report from the United Nations in 2000.

In regards to a specialized labor force, this has multiplied in Europe, especially in the southern countries, with bilateral agreements made with the countries of origin as a means to facilitate the importation of temporary migrants in sectors with

a high degree of seasonal fluctuation. The professional qualification and education (formal, specialized and linguistic training) of migrants has acquired a remarkable role in the establishing of the conditions of eligibility. In this way, it has become manifest in the points quota system. Specialists have indicated that the use of these criteria in admissions produces a double advantage: it assures, on the one hand, a high productivity from the migrants who are adapted to the necessities of the labor markets, and, on the other hand, it reduces the educational costs of the receptor countries, as these expenses are then assumed by the countries of origin.

The perception of immigration as an economic resource has also sponsored the recruitment of investors and specialized professionals who are converted into the “right immigrants,” i.e., legitimate receptors of the benefits of the welfare state. In opposition to other forms of migration considered abusive and which feed the stereotypes of “the negative fiscal balance of immigration,” qualified immigration is nowadays considered as an active form of innovation and development for the receptor countries. The control of migrational flows has been configured, indeed, as a sphere of public policy submitted to a double tension: on the one hand, in the search for a suitable balance between the forces that consider it to be ideal to close the country off from migrations, and, on the other hand, the pressures from many very diverse natures which direct the way towards opening up these flows. Both processes are not directed with equal intensity towards the entire spectrum of immigration. The perfecting of the politics of closure and the containing of undesirable immigration is played out with a simultaneous policy for the promotion of the “right” immigrants.

The new approaches to regulating migration, which seek to channel them in an orderly fashion, arise in an international scene which emphasizes creating instruments to recruit foreign workers that are more in line with the needs of the countries of origin, destination and of the immigrants themselves, while also promoting hiring in the country of origin and circulatory migration.

New formulas for managing labour migration on an international scale are currently being tested. The economic and demographic needs of many destination countries seem to have activated these new labour policies, which at first glance appear to return to some models from the past, according to Stephan Castles and Manuel Abella. The new worker recruitment programmes are a viable alternative to the approaches to managing migration used over the past two decades. These programmes seem to harmoniously combine and synthesize “politics” and the “economy”, the conflict between need and rejection (Favell and Hansen 2002), and have also opened an academic debate on circulatory migration.

Abella indicated that the renewed interest shown by governments in these kinds of programmes, as opposed to programmes of permanent settling, is due to various factors. First of all, they contribute to greater flexibility in the labour market. This is considerably important to many countries due to their ageing active populations, the new skills demanded in the industrial and technological sectors and the lower tendency toward mobility of the local populations as a consequence of improved welfare. Secondly, these kinds of policies provoke less opposition in public opinion, which has repeatedly shown reticence to permanently incorporate

populations that are perceived as “hardly integratable” (Abella 2006). They also appear to be a way to contain irregular immigration. The existence of regulated channels of access to receiving countries could diminish both unauthorized entrance and “befallen” irregularity.

There is something approaching consensus among specialists that these programs are a solution in which all the actors involved win in what was traditionally considered a zero sum game (Martin 2008). In countries of origin, they are seen as a way to acquire currency and technical knowledge, stop the “brain drain” and improve commercial exchange without losing the sectors of their population that have the most skills and greatest initiative. Receiving countries also benefit because they can cover their labour needs without having to pay the costs generated when migrants settle permanently. Finally, the migrants are better off because they can gain access to the labour market of the richest countries while maintaining family relations and their way of life through labour mobility that allows them to come and go. Although there have been profuse comparisons, the objectives and scope of these programmes are different from those implemented in Europe during the 1970s.

Circulatory migration has been defined as a new kind of human mobility that is much more ambitious than the single, temporary mobility presented by past worker recruitment programmes, in which the migrant’s return to their country of origin ended a finite migration trajectory (Newland et al. 2008). In contrast, these new programmes are based on the idea that after returning (and being provided support to return) migrants can then repeat the cycle, thus allowing them to maintain their social and labour links in both countries, as well as their ties to processes promoting economic development in their countries of origin. These are the characteristic elements of this “secure labour migration” that make it distinctive from past models. In addition to being bilateral, between countries of origin and destination, this approach counts on joint, multilateral management, which leads to mobility partnerships with the EU.

However, the initiation of these kinds of policies has also been greatly criticized. The most notable criticisms refer to how these programmes limit the rights of migrants. Secondly, the processes of selecting workers, often carried out by the authorities in the country of origin, have revealed forms of patronage and mechanisms to distribute privileges. Thirdly, the ways in which the selection of workers is carried by the countries of destination, using criteria based on nationality or marital status, has been roundly criticized. Other difficulties arise from the institutional management of the projects.

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