

3 The limits of inclusion

Globalization, neoliberal capitalism and state policies of border control

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Introduction

It is impossible to talk about globalization without reference to geographical borders and their control. Insofar as globalization practically consists in the greater mobility of capital and the rise of vital international interconnections between nation-states as the latter are incorporated in the global economy (Nelken 2011), it necessarily requires the unsettling and relaxation of long-established territorial borders, or what is referred to in relevant scholarship as the process of ‘detritorialization’. This process, however, should not be taken to imply a waning of state sovereignty. If anything, as Wilson and Donnan (2012, 5) argue, the advent of globalization and deterritorialization has coincided with ‘more states, more state institutions, more state intrusion in the daily lives of citizens and denizens (through the utilization of new technologies), and more state intervention into global political economy’.

The persistence and, indeed, expansion of the nation-state in the face of globalization is perhaps most evident in the countries that have seen their economies undergo rapid and thorough neoliberalization in the triple sense of deregulated financial flows, relaxed administrative controls on the employment market, and retrenched social spending. Here globalization is evoked to legitimate the surrender of national economies to financial markets in line with the dogma of neoliberal capitalism. That is to say, the neoliberalization of the economy is justified as a writ of fate: either negatively, as the unavoidable by-product of the invisible forces of globalization; or positively, as the only road to individual and national prosperity in an environment of global market competition. This two-pronged teleology underpins those discourses which seek to naturalize the shift of responsibility for security and welfare onto the shoulders of private individuals themselves. In reality, however, and not unlike deterritorialization, adoption of the ideas, ideals and policies of neoliberal capitalism is ultimately the outcome of largely autonomous decisions taken by domestic governing elites in favour of domestic capital, even though external interests, influences and pressures are by no means to be ignored (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1999; see also Weiss 1998; Cohen 2006; Cheliotis and Xenakis 2010).

Globalization in general and deterritorialization in particular are crucial conditions that nation-states need to meet to achieve and sustain the neoliberalization of

their respective economies. Although, as Aihwa Ong (2006) has shown in her ethnographic work on East and Southeast Asian states, the doctrine of neoliberalism is malleable in its application and thus taken up differently by different regimes – such differences being themselves yet more proof that the sovereignty of the nation-state has endured – a constant feature of neoliberalized state economies is their strict reliance on policies and practices of debordering. It is not simply that extreme poverty, wars, persecutions, human rights abuses and other adversities in various parts of the world have combined to give rise to a global reserve army of exploitable migrant labourers to whom neoliberal states may allow entry, regularly or otherwise, according to domestic market needs (De Giorgi 2010). Just as more powerful neoliberal states may be willing to relax their national borders in order to ‘import’ cheap foreign labour, weaker neoliberal states may be willing to make such labour readily available by ‘exporting’ suitably flexible domestic workers overseas.

The immigrant labour flows from the Philippines to neighbouring Malaysia offer a good case in point. In response to recent shortages in its domestic plantation and construction industries, Malaysia has been drawing cheap immigrant workers from the Philippines. Malaysia has also depended on the Philippines for service workers and maids in particular. At a time when cheap domestic help has become an inevitable necessity for the ever-increasing number of two-income middle-class Malay families that want to attain or retain a high standard of living, the Filipino state has gone so far as to advertise globally the ‘export value’ of indigenous women as service workers naturally endowed with discipline and a sense of responsibility, whilst urging female would-be migrants themselves to seek jobs abroad because their earnings will be needed by the country and their families (see further Ong 2006; also see Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003).

To be sure, state capitalism has always relied inextricably on the selective relaxation of border controls as a means of facilitating mass labour emigration and immigration. For example, as economic historians Timothy Hatton and Jeffrey Williamson (2008) argue, non-forced mass migration dates back to the early nineteenth century, when around 60 million Europeans set sail for the resource-abundant yet labour-scarce New World, most of them in a bid to escape impoverished living conditions at home. This is not to say that the combination of economic hardship in the sending countries, on the one hand, and relaxed national borders in both the sending and the receiving countries, on the other, provides a sufficient explanation for the size of non-forced migratory flows at any given time. If anything, to borrow again from Hatton and Williamson (2008), emigration rates can be lowest from the poorest regions and households of a certain country even when immigration policies abroad are largely liberal.

An important missing variable here is advancement in transport and communication technologies, which helps to reduce, although by no means eradicate, the costs and uncertainty of migration. Technological advances and their geographical spread are key to understanding, for instance, how workers from poorer parts of Europe (e.g. Italy, Poland) started being able to emigrate in large numbers to the New World from the mid-nineteenth century onwards; and how, despite

stricter immigration policies, vast swaths of workers from so-called Third World countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America have managed to reach the wealthy, industrialized First World nations during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (Hatton and Williamson 2008).

Of course, for would-be irregular migrants (that is, migrants without papers), access to either advanced or even basic transportation technology is not always an option; hence, many resort to trekking thousands of kilometres. Nor does access to transportation technology necessarily undermine the risks that clandestine border-crossing so often poses to one's life, whether from natural dangers (e.g. sea storms) or from hazardous practices some border authorities adopt in blatant contravention of international human rights legislation (e.g. refoulement at sea; see further Amnesty International 2012; Inda 2006; Mitsilegas, this volume). However, for the overwhelming majority of irregular migrants and especially for those starting their journey from faraway countries, migration would be simply unthinkable without a modicum of access to improved transport technologies (see Hernández-León 2013).

It is no surprise that critical reports and commentaries on the relationship between globalization, neoliberal capitalism, and border control policies and practices usually focus on the array of national and international efforts to manage the flows of poor immigrants into the advanced economies of the West. Yet the thrust of those works tends to revolve around the notion of physical or geographical exclusion, with continents and nation-states being typically described as impermeable 'fortresses' (see e.g. Carr 2012). This chapter demonstrates that such critiques are to a significant degree misplaced. This is not only because, as mentioned earlier, 'exclusionary' border control policies and practices are by design imperfect on the ground; it is also because the failure to fully and permanently exclude poor migrants from national territories is, in fact, necessary for a variety of projects of politicoeconomic domination, the targets of which actually extend beyond migrant labourers themselves to mainstream society in its entirety. For these projects to be successful, the inclusion of poor migrants needs to take a variety of specific and ascertainable forms – if not meagre, at least incomplete, social and legal rights and entitlements (see Cornelisse, this volume; Torresi, this volume), yet dynamic and rigid carceral control. To this extent, inclusion is part of the problem to be solved, not part of the solution, and critical interventions in the field of symbolic politics that aim to advance what is referred to in this book as 'peace at the border' need to adjust their conceptual apparatus and vocabulary accordingly.

National borders: porous borders, ample cheap labour

Critical scholars and commentators tend to describe the border control policies and practices systematically adopted in neoliberal capitalist economies as processes of 'rebordering': that is, as attempts to solidify national borders against global migration flows, and especially against immigration from the poorest parts of the world. At first glance, it might seem counterintuitive to suggest otherwise.

Insofar as free mobility has grown to be a synonym of success in life under conditions of neoliberal globalization, one might reasonably expect that immobility, or at least exclusion from one's own national territory, is the fate reserved for those issuing from so-called failed states around the globe. That irregular migrants are often forced by border authorities to navigate risky border zones (e.g. Australia, US–Mexico border, Greece) and many die as a result (see further Weber and Pickering 2011) appears to lend support to this argument.

Zygmunt Bauman's account of the cultural convergence between the concepts of freedom and spatial mobility, and between their opposites, is helpful here:

Life ambitions are more often than not expressed in terms of mobility, free choice of place, travelling, seeing the world; the life fears, on the contrary, are talked about in terms of confinement to a place, lack of change, being barred from places which others traverse easily, explore and enjoy. 'Good life' is life on the move; more precisely, the comfort of being confident of the facility to move elsewhere in case staying on no more satisfies. Freedom came to mean above all freedom of choice, and choice has acquired, conspicuously, a spatial dimension. [. . .] Enforced immobility, the condition of being tied to a place and not allowed to quit, seems a most abominable, cruel, and repulsive state; it is the blank prohibition to move, which renders that condition especially offensive. Being prohibited is a most potent symbol of impotence and incapacitation – and the most acute of pains.

(Bauman 2000, 38–39)

The same holds true of mobility that is enforced. What allows for finding ontological fulfilment in the process of tourism, for example, is that tourists travel 'because they want to', as opposed to vagabonds, the multitudes of refugees and immigrants who travel 'because they have no other bearable choice'. Indeed, as Bauman goes on to argue, 'the life of tourists would not be half as enjoyable as it is, were there no vagabonds around to show what alternative to that life [. . .] would be like' (Bauman 1998, 94, 98–99; see also Salecl 2004).

Critical analyses of border control, however, often exaggerate the impermeability of national borders, treating them as strictly linear structures when they are actually points of variable intensity (Rahola 2011; see also Bourbeau 2011). In so doing, moreover, critical analyses of border control usually miss or undermine the importance of that form of migrant mobility which is also enforced inside national territories. Indeed, to adequately explain the porousness of national borders one needs to consider more than the purely practical impediments to effective border control (e.g. extensive borderlands, lack of financial resources): one also needs to examine politicoeconomic functions that are facilitated by border controls designed to be sufficiently ineffective to allow enforced migrant mobility to continue inside nation-states.

As mentioned earlier, neoliberal capitalist states need to relax national border controls to enable the immigration of mass cheap labour. If, in fact, the mobility of migrant labour is to be of any use to receiving states and their citizens, it needs

to extend inside national territories. For example, just as poor migrants need to be able to move between rural and urban areas according to domestic market needs, so too they need to be able to cross the invisible but supposedly rigid borders of the derelict neighbourhoods where they usually reside so they can facilitate the lives of the working rich. As Jock Young reminds us in his critique of the ‘dual city’ thesis of human ecology, the working poor (e.g. domestic workers, nurses, taxi drivers, door attendants) are permitted to ply their way regularly across the invisible ghetto borders of Washington, DC, because ‘the availability of such cheap “help” [. . .] enables the dual career families to continue’ (Young 1999, 472).

Migrant poverty, however, does not suffice to account for the exploitability of migrant labour. The latter, I argue below, is ensured or at least maximized when the relative porosity of national borders and the mobility of migrant labour are accompanied by the threat of enclosure within the rigid borders of an expansive carceral system.

Carceral borders: rigid borders, flexible labour, manageable public

An inherent component of the neoliberalization of the economy is the relaxation of administrative controls on the employment market. Flexibilized conditions of work and the rise of job precariousness in particular ensure greater exploitability of the labour force. This phenomenon is what Pierre Bourdieu (1998, 85) describes by the portmanteau term ‘flexploitation’ – namely, ‘a mode of domination of a new [neoliberal] kind, based on the creation of a generalized and permanent state of insecurity aimed at forcing workers into submission, into the acceptance of exploitation’.

Job insecurity under neoliberal capitalism is further increased through the creation and maintenance of a large reserve army of labourers. At the same time, the effectiveness of job insecurity as a mechanism of labour control is enhanced by rendering it ever more preferable to the prospect of unemployment through the reduction of welfare provisions for those outside the labour market. The large swaths of poor migrants from the ‘global South’ who keep crossing the porous borders of neoliberalized Western countries (in the global ‘North’) in search of a better future lend themselves ideally as both exploitable labourers and eager reserves. This is not just because of their poverty and numbers, but also commonly by dint of their irregular status, which automatically precludes them from access to whatever has remained of labour rights and welfare provision (see further Bigo 2002; Melossi 2003; Calavita 2005; Lawrence 2005; De Giorgi 2010; Brotherton and Barrios 2011; Lazaridis 2011; Sawyer and Blitz 2011).

On occasion, strategies of migrant labour control resemble incarceration, or even slavery. In Singapore and Malaysia, for instance, most foreign domestic workers are not guaranteed rest days, and in any case, their middle-class employers commonly confine them within the household in an endless round of housework by withholding their passports and work papers (Ong 2006, 201–05). In the vast strawberry plantation of Nea Manolada in Greece, meanwhile, migrant

agricultural workers have been forced to live in barracks under degrading conditions and to pay more than half their meagre salary to employers for rent. This situation has long been tolerated by officials at the Greek Ministry of Labour and only came to public attention in 2013, when Greek foremen began shooting at 200 workers demanding six months' unpaid wages (see further Channel 4 2013; also, more generally, Lawrence 2005).

But incarceration proper is even more significant to migrant labour control, not least because of the scope of regulatory intervention it affords. What is known in penological literature as the 'less eligibility' principle, whereby the working and unemployed poor are controlled by constant threats of a fate worse than poverty and the looming prospect of long-term incarceration for minor infractions – and under harsh conditions, at that – adds impetus to the exploitability of the most marginalized segments of the labour market, forcing them either to accept any available condition of work in the free community or to await their chance in a disciplined fashion. To this extent, and at least as concerns poor migrants, the politicoeconomic implications of the porousness of national borders depend on the rigidity of carceral borders, be they the borders of conventional prisons or those of immigration detention centres. To put the point in the language of border studies, external debordering requires internal rebordering (see further Wacquant 1999; Calavita 2005; De Giorgi 2010).

Concurrently, in the large and ever-growing number of countries around the world that have seen their economies undergo rapid and thorough neoliberalization, the expanded use of conventional imprisonment and immigration detention against the poor performs a crucial symbolic, if ultimately still materialist, function in the broader public. In this case, governing elites use incarceration as a convenient cathartic remedy for heightened socioeconomic discontents among the citizenry, ranging from their own job insecurity as a result of spreading unemployment, to poverty and hunger, to ontological anxieties such as being unable to enjoy unrestricted spatial mobility.

It may be recalled that what are portrayed as the 'elusive' forces of globalization are evoked as a political excuse for surrendering national economies to financial markets so as to transfer responsibility for security and welfare from the state to private individuals, in line with the ideology of neoliberal capitalism. In multi-party democracies, however, the mix of diminished government accountability and continuing public insecurities is likely to generate a crisis of legitimation for the established party political order and eventually to result in voting for the opposition. Although this does not necessarily challenge neoliberal capitalism – despite proclamations to the contrary, neoliberal capitalism may be embraced equally by politicians of the centre-right or those of the centre-left (Wacquant 2009) – neoliberal elites in office may face a real prospect of losing power.

The imposition of pain on weaker others through incarceration is also a politically convenient outlet for the cathartic discharge of stubborn anxieties among the public (see also Michalowski, this volume), anxieties that arise from discourse that exacerbates concerns over violent street crime. In itself, violent street crime invites decisive state intervention in the relatively inexpensive expansion of

incarceration by drawing on established grounds of rationality and morality: retribution, for example, whereby immobilization through custodial confinement is deserved by those allegedly restricting other people's mobility by turning public places into 'danger zones' or 'no-go areas'. But – and this is crucial to the prior process of anxiety displacement – violent street crime also creates angst suitably analogous to that resulting from neoliberal socioeconomic policies, including the reduced ability to be geographically mobile because of the depletion of private resources. It should not come as a surprise that foreigners and immigrants are commonly scapegoated as bearing primary responsibility for violent crime on the streets, given the weak political position they usually occupy in society (a point also raised by Vasilev, this volume), itself largely the outcome of unjust socioeconomic policies of neoliberal orientation (see further Cheliotis 2013a; also Kubrin *et al.* 2012).

This argument may be advanced further: in addition to the fact of their custodial immobilization, the inhumane and degrading conditions under which incarcerated foreigners and immigrants are typically kept also perform important symbolic functions in the public and political domains. Such conditions unconsciously help to mitigate the pains of downward mobility and falling living standards for average citizens, reassuring them that they still enjoy material advantages over those on the fringes of society. The point here is not so much that prisoners are held under conditions inferior to those found in free society, as the principle of less eligibility stipulates, but rather that free society itself tends to interpret the notoriously substandard conditions of incarceration in terms of personal and in-group superiority – as a form of 'more eligibility', as it were (Cheliotis 2013b).

For all these reasons, and unlike what dominant political discourse suggests (and pertinent criminological scholarship frequently takes for granted), in practice neoliberal elites in office are much less determined to reduce the number of foreigners and migrants inside the borders of their respective nation-states or, indeed, to better the conditions of foreigner and immigrant inclusion, whether in society at large or behind the walls of carceral institutions. There appears to be an inverse relationship between, on the one hand, public socioeconomic insecurities and attendant legitimization problems for governing parties and, on the other hand, the degree of government commitment to countering infiltration of national borders, deporting 'surplus' foreigner and migrant populations, and improving the conditions under which foreigners and migrants are kept in conventional prisons and administrative detention centres. In fact, whether by commission or omission, governments often seem to play a key role in maintaining things as they are.

The case of Greece – the main point of entry for irregular migration in the European Union, but also a country that claims to archetypically embody hospitality to strangers – is telling. The infamous long barbed-wire fence in the Evros region was constructed with a delay inversely proportional to the urgency ascribed to it in dominant political discourse as a means of preventing irregular immigration across the mainland border with Turkey. Similarly, although the size of the irregular migrant population in Greece does not appear to have substantially changed in recent years, the number of irregular migrants apprehended

annually nearly halved between 2008 and 2012. Furthermore, whilst the legal maximum duration of immigrant detention has been repeatedly extended since 2009 – indeed, as of April 2014, irregular migrants may be detained in Greece indefinitely so long as their eventual deportation has not yet become possible – the volume of actual deportations has significantly declined.

Despite sustained criticism and censure by domestic and international actors, meanwhile, the Greek state has neither ceased making excessive use of immigration detention nor sought to tackle the deplorable conditions under which irregular migrants are detained. All this has helped to maintain both a sufficiently large reserve army of labourers and a high degree of exploitability in the informal labour market. At the same time, it has allowed governing parties to manage a range of discontents among the broader public, from heightened socioeconomic anxieties, to increased anger with political elites, to a spreading sense of national humiliation before foreign audiences since the financial crisis hit Greece in 2009 and the subsequent introduction of neoliberal austerity measures to meet the conditions of successive bailouts (see further Cheliotis 2014).

Beyond inclusion: for a global ethics

In representative democracies, the preferences of the average citizen impose limits on the design and implementation of government policies (see e.g. Page and Shapiro 1983; Gibson 1992). This should not be taken to mean that governing elites bear reduced responsibility for their policy decisions. Rather, the implication here is that any effort to counter the injustices inherent in neoliberal border control policies needs to incorporate interventions in the field of symbolic politics and direct engagement in public debate. Such interventions, I want to argue in the remainder of the chapter, should avoid the misleading explanations and counterproductive prescriptions for action offered by the discourse of exclusion commonly used to critique neoliberal border control policies.

‘Peace at the border’ requires that an end be brought to neoliberal domination, not simply to exclusion. The discourse of exclusion not only undermines the degree to which national borders are actually permeable but also reaffirms the desirability of ‘the inside’, thus foreclosing critical analysis of both the terms of inclusion and the underlying politicoeconomic order (Allen 2005a). It follows that the transition from exclusion to inclusion – the horizontal move from ‘outside’ to ‘inside’ – cannot be taken at face value as a remedy to domination, which is, after all, a problem of vertical, top-down social relations (Allen 2005b; see also Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos 2008; Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos and FitzGerald 2008). Inclusion may be, in fact, a necessary prerequisite of domination; as explained earlier, for instance, labour exploitation may only occur so long as a sufficiently large pool of ‘surplus’ exploitable labourers has been made available within a given territory.

One might argue that geographical inclusion, to the extent that it has occurred already, at least offers concrete opportunities for direct action against unjust conditions of socioeconomic inclusion. Be that as it may, the possibilities for moral

conduct are not exhausted with the prevention of further injustice to sufferers who are in sight or within reach. Bauman (1997) issued a call to transcend the narrow confines of territoriality, the micro space where direct interpersonal encounters develop and particular demands for help and justice come to the fore. Instead of contenting ourselves with acting on the present other, Bauman claims, we ought to recognize our responsibility for all possible cases of human suffering and injustice, whether proximal and visible or not (see further Hudson, this volume; also Žižek 2005).

But we can raise our aspirations even higher and combine the spatial generalization of ethics – what Hudson discusses in this volume as cosmopolitanism or Kantian hospitality – with a temporal shift from practical expressions of empathy after an act has occurred to the prevention of such acts in the first place. The realization of either or both mandates, however, is bound to remain a programmatic ideal so long as it is tied tightly to the variable powers of individuals for abstraction and imagination, unless, that is, the sociopolitical processes that determine who is represented in the public domain and under what terms – the very processes that place constraints on the generalized feasibility of abstraction and imagination (Vetlesen 1997) – are exposed and redirected towards ethical concerns on a societal scale.

As Bourdieu (2008, 65) forewarns, formal recognition of personal responsibility for all humankind needs to be coupled with persevering critical reflection on social structures in their entirety, or else one swiftly drifts into ‘moralism as egoistic universalism’, a sensationalized discourse that leaves conscience intact and obscures the need for political intervention (see also Chouliaraki 2006, 211–12). Critical reflection, however, presupposes ideal-typical yardsticks against which to compare and after which to model extant social arrangements. The immediate question does not simply concern the constitutive content of the yardsticks to be chosen, but rather extends to the implications that such choices carry for the objects to be evaluated. In particular, is it possible to favour given anthropological laws without engaging in normative authoritarianism – not dissimilar to the monolithic discourse that legitimates neoliberalism and paves the way to labour exploitation? The answer is that reality may well be assessed by reference to the principles of universalism it itself purports to nourish so long as sufficient light is shed upon their essential meaning (Bourdieu 1998). The roots of human solidarity, for instance, are to be located within structures of equality; the roots of equality itself, within structures that promote difference rather than uniformity.

Before all else, however – given that humans are particularly prone to clinging to classificatory ideological narratives when feeling tangled in intense insecurity about their actual life prospects (Cassirer 1946), including situations created by neoliberal socioeconomic policies – any effort to counter the injustices served by neoliberal border controls needs to expose neoliberalism both as the driving force behind conditionally inclusive border controls and as the context within which the injustices of inclusion can be given appearances of legitimacy more effectively.

Once such advances have occurred in the field of symbolic politics, it will be realistically possible to push for fairer socioeconomic policies – from job creation

and increased protection against exploitation in the labour market, to substantially increased minimum wages, to universal access to sufficient welfare, to progressive taxes on the rich – so as to start practically reversing the stark inequalities of wealth and income inside nation-states. Internationally, meanwhile, it will no longer be utopian to call for a new and more representative world financial authority that will replace such US-dominated institutions as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization (see further Barry 2005).

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