

IPW LECTURES

Everyday Bordering and Hierarchies of Belonging in the Context of the Brexit Continuum

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Abstract:

I address the theme of (be)coming home through examining how everyday state bordering has become a major technology of control in ways that re-construct hierarchies of belonging in multicultural societies. Using the example of the UK, I explore the 'Brexit continuum of everyday bordering' whereby since 2012, the British government has aimed to create and to extend, a 'hostile environment' for 'illegal' workers via state bordering practices in the contexts of, for example, marriage, employment, accommodation, health and education. These challenge the vision of a convivial multicultural society and have a deep impact on the lives of 'irregular' migrants, other migrants, members of racialized minority groups as well as all other members of the society. Discourses of 'invisible', 'seamless' and 'frictionless' borders are now commonplace in Brexit debates about the UK's land and sea borders with the EU where conversations about the smuggling of goods quickly shift to discussions about immigration and rights of belonging. Whilst everyday state bordering carried out by ordinary citizens as employers, landlords or health workers is increasingly central to government immigration policy, their discourse continues to construct 'the UK border' as an external, territorial boundary, obscuring the impacts of the internal border checks on differently positioned individuals and impose border guarding responsibilities onto ordinary citizens. I consider the evolving impacts of everyday state bordering on shifting hierarchies of belonging through examining situated, intersectional bordering encounters in the areas of employment, accommodation, health and education including the situated gazes of landlords, small business employers, professional border officers, administrators, and of 'suspected border crossers'.