

Migrants, Borders and Access: EU's biopolitics of fear and comfort protection

Abstract

Within the European Union, an internal liberalisation of cross-border labour mobility for EU citizens is currently being combined with the tightening of control and management efforts at the external borders. At the same time, attempts are being made to strategically select immigrants from new member states as well as from outside the EU who will be of economic value. In this paper we argue that by implementing such protectionist and selective immigration policy, the EU has come to resemble a gated community in which the biopolitical control and management of immigration is, to a large extent, the product of fear. Often fear manifests itself in terms of fear of losing material gain, e.g. the anxiety of losing economic welfare or public security. More often, however, this fear relates to the entrance of the immigrant, the stranger and is, as such, associated with a fear of losing a community's self-defined identity. These perceived threats to a community's comfort lead to the politicisation of protection, whereby the *terra incognita* beyond the border is justifiably neglected due to the indifference shown and the intentional blindness to the outside. Hiding in a gated community in order to protect this comfort zone and trying to exclude outsiders, 'Others', from the community, is not only in vain since the desire for completion of the Self can never be fulfilled, but what remains still more troublesome, is that this tendency will sustain and reproduce global inequality and segregation, both in the material as well as symbolic sense.