Border Policing: Security, Gender and Human Rights

DIAC Consultation on Research Design and Scope, May 2011

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The Research

The Future Fellowship Research Program is funded by the Federal Government through the Australian Research Council

4 year, $1M research investment to better understand women’s unauthorised border crossing

Primarily qualitative study supported by robust secondary statistical analysis.

The relationships between women’s unauthorised border crossing decisions and border policing practices
Why am I interested in this research?

Criminologist with a background in policing of politically motivated violence in Northern Ireland and Counter-terrorism policing. My research has been concerned with the ways illicit markets and practices develop in relation to policing and control initiatives. Long standing research area of gender and crime.

Specifically concerned with how we conceptualise the border and police it. In this case specifically in relation to gender.

Global drivers and local manifestations of unauthorised mobility and responses to it. Long standing collaborations in Italy and the US through University of Bologna and Arizona State University.
Australia, Italy and the US

Universal visa system
Protection
Airport and Maritime

Regional arrangements
Protection + Maritime and entry through another EU entry point

Irregular economy
Workers + protection
Land borders (US/Mex)
Understanding women’s decision making in unauthorised border crossing

- Gender specific issues: pregnancy
- Smuggling
- Identification and consumption of knowledge about border policing
- Threatened or actual violence
- Key life triggers
- Children
- Strategic movement
- Involvement in Decision Making

Strategic movement
Project Proposed Scope

To focus on the ways women have irregularly crossed borders over the past ten years.

Identifying key trends between and within groups, as well as individual factors, that inform their strategies in relation to knowledge of and experience with border policing practices.

Predominantly qualitative study with secondary statistical analysis of available data sets.
WHY FOCUS ON WOMEN?

Global data suggests women are increasingly mobile. However this is dependent on location and may more often include internal migration. Available data tells us women are less willing to play ‘cat and mouse’ with border policing.

The risks of unauthorised mobility are not evenly distributed: women and children more likely to die attempting to cross borders than men.

That unauthorised mobility is key site for unchecked violence, with relatively little empirical evidence available on gender based violence occurring in this context.

The focus on gender could assist in finding ways to prevent the harm associated with unauthorised mobility for key groups.
### Which women and Why?

Limit scope to the following groups/sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Where identified</th>
<th>Border crossing site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women prevented from irregular border crossing</td>
<td>Women identified by airlines, ALOs or offshore intelligence and prevented from travelling</td>
<td>Overseas airports; Embassies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women rejected following irregular border crossing</td>
<td>a) Women turned around at airports for purposes contrary to visa</td>
<td>Airports</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Women who claim protection and rejected</td>
<td>Airports</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maritime Arrivals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women who undertake irregular border crossing and permitted entry</td>
<td>a) make successful protection application</td>
<td>Airports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maritime arrivals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The stories of women

What border policing activities do they identify in each stage? How do they differentiate between agencies and approaches?

Strategies they used to subvert or avoid these?

Sources and consumption of information about border policing activities?
Border Policing and the Multi Agency environment

- Australia: DIAC, Customs and AFP
- US: ICE and Border Patrol
- Italy: FRONTEX and Guarda di Finanza

Within each agency there are a range of points of contact for women. Seek to understand the experiences and observations of key agency personnel.
Proposed focus of Interviews:
– Observed trends in women’s behaviour and claims
– Observations of women in different travel configurations
– Conversations and observations with women with regards to the stages of travel
– Conversations and observations with women with regards to key decision making points

Need to identify key points of contact for each agency
What can Existing data tell us?

Disaggregated data by gender, ethnicity, country of origin, travel configuration, (boat), dependents, pregnancy, protection application and outcome—identification of trends within and between key groups.

Attempt to match this against kind of smuggling operation engaged and other key decision making points.

Data on women’s unauthorised border crossing is difficult to access and is often partial. Need for robust data to better understand the volatility of existing figures.
Connecting academic inquiry to policy and practice

Usefulness of data for agencies?

Specific benefits in relation to policy settings or implementation strategies

Importance of collaboration in the conduct of independent research

OUTCOME 1: A new knowledge base of migration management for extra legal border crossing;

OUTCOME 2: A robust evidence base for border policing that is locally grounded and globally connected, and adaptable to the changing gendered determinants of unauthorized mobility as well as future challenges of unauthorized mobility.

OUTCOME 3: A rich picture of local and international factors that push and pull unauthorized border crossing.

OUTCOME 4: A new theoretical understanding of social control and state craft

OUTCOME 5: Establish an international network of border policing scholars and practitioners that will lead a new generation of research knowledge around the regulation of borders.
Ongoing consultation and communication of results: digestible and timely
Feedback

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