

Abstract

This study offers a critical analysis of the Canadian immigration system through a detailed examination of the process of an immigrant's selection from within the category of "skilled workers." It questions the relationship between the Canadian and Quebecois society and immigration by focusing on the way the state operates through the management of the exclusion/inclusion of immigrants, while trying to understand what is at stake during the immigration process by underlining the effects which that unfold upon those involved in this process. Specifically, the study seeks to see how various representations of the immigrant have crystallized over the time, in turn influencing current representations. It is not a matter of questioning the conditions of their emergence, but rather to see the effects they produce. It is also important to identify the range of strategies and practices at work in the immigration process. Starting with a particular case, it is possible to highlight wider dynamics and make apparent the links between global trends in immigration (commodification and securitization) and their articulations with a specific national policy.

This research is articulated around three approaches: an anthropology of institutions, an anthropology of the state, bureaucracy and bureaucrats and an anthropology of policy. The intricacies between these approaches places the focus on several constitutive elements of the apparatus surrounding immigration, in particular Canadian and Quebecois immigration institutions, legislative and statutory texts, policies, speeches, diverse measures and procedures implemented, the practices of employees within these institutions, etc. Through a "problematization" of the relationship to immigration, the aim is to retrace the transformations and movements of this relationship and to recast it in its historicity so as to see how immigration and immigrants are constituted as subjects. More succinctly, it is a questioning of the historic horizon within which the current management of immigration takes shape. This understanding of the implementation of migratory control in Canada is also based on an examination of current immigration

policies. It seeks to highlight the implicit categories associated with the constitution of the “subject-immigrant,” starting from bureaucratic and administrative categorizations, in order to question the construction of polarized categories – “commodity” and “threat” – accompanying the “manufacturing” of the “perfect” immigrant. The ethnographic data provided allows an understanding of the strategies and daily practices that are materialized within immigration institutions in order to highlight the effects they produce on immigrants – processes of desubjectivation/resubjectivation, negation of personal life history, reduction to a simple preestablished category – and to examine the micropolitics at work. Finally, the arguments are recast into a wider logics of contemporary migration management. The commodification and securitization of immigration are effectively at the heart of the apparatus surrounding immigration, the “actualisation principles” of the migratory management that allow the indirect regulation of migratory flows that facilitate circulation deemed “beneficial” for Canada, while, at the same time, restricting those who could be “threatening”. In short, this research allows us to understand what consists of the management of immigration in Canada.

Keywords: Anthropology, Ethnology, Institutions, Immigration, Apparatus, Migratory Control, Canada.