

South American border regimes: Mobilities and immobilities of Venezuelan

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Abstract

Based on the ethnographic method, this paper aims to explain how immigration and border control policies have influenced the mobilities and immobilities of the Venezuelan migrant population, from 2017 to 2022, focusing on the spatiality of two border cities in Ecuador: Tulcan (northern border) and Huaquillas (southern border). The Latin American border context is a crucial setting to explore how border regimes affect south-south migration and to examine the spatial dynamics of these cities in political and institutional terms. The paper is divided into two parts. The first part explains the institutional disorder in border cities that emerged with the Declaration of Emergency in 2018 due to high flows of Venezuelan migrant population and, subsequently, with the closing and opening of border crossings due to the pandemic. The second part analyzes the composition of border regimes and the strategies of the Venezuelan migrant population. The objective is to explain how border regimes are heterogeneous and how a multiplicity of actors interact in order to understand certain particularities in border spaces and how the Venezuelan migrant population has created strategies to cope with immobility policies. Overall, this study offers valuable insights into the complexities of border regimes and the strategies employed by migrant populations to navigate them. By focusing on the experiences of Venezuelan migrants in two border cities, the paper contributes to a broader understanding of the impact of immigration policies on mobilities and immobilities in Latin America.

Biography

Tania Bonilla Mena is a PhD candidate in Sociology at the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences, FLACSO Ecuador. She holds an MA in Gender Studies (FLACSO Ecuador) and a BA in Sociology (Pontifical Catholic University). Her research interests are gender studies, international migration, border studies and globalization. She has conducted research on deportation regimes and undocumented women in the United States. Her doctoral research delves deeper into the study of border regimes, analyzing the mobilities and immobilities of the Venezuelan migrant population in the face of the reinforcement of migration policies and border control in Ecuador and the South American context.