

Visual Governance: Theorizing the role of images in migration governance

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Abstract

Despite an increasing attention to images in the study of world politics, traditional methodological approaches are yet quite limited when it comes to analysing how meaning is produced. This is especially true with references to issues such as mobility, migration policies, identity, and agency. In this sense, given the role that images have in world affairs – by contributing to the process of meaning production – an analysis of governance that acknowledges the importance of the notion of productive power, needs to be extended to visual representation. Given the role of images today communicative sphere and the multiple ways in which digital technologies and social media are transforming the governance landscape, providing new avenues for new actors and transforming power relations between the existing actors, this paper proposes a framework to theorize the role of images in migration governance. It is advanced that this new theoretical approach should firstly address all different relevant layers of governance: not only policies, practices, regulations but also discourses/representations. Secondly, it should include all relevant actors (not only actors at the macro and meso level but also individuals acting at the micro level). Finally, the proposed theoretical framework should be based on the understanding that the role of images in migration governance should be thought of on the basis of an iterative approach between the image/visual communication sphere and the governance realm.

Biography

Alice Massari holds a Marie Curie Global Fellowship with CERC Migration and the University of Copenhagen. She holds a PhD in Political Science, European Politics and International Relations and an MA in International Relations. Since 2007 and before joining Toronto Metropolitan University, Alice worked in the humanitarian sector as a researcher, aid worker and consultant. Over the last 15 years, she has worked as Senior Humanitarian Analyst for the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), and as an expert on migration for the European Commission, as well as an aid worker in Africa and the Middle East. Her research and writing focus on migration, humanitarianism, visuality and securitization.