

Stories from the hidden world of immigration detention in Canada

Abstract

This study will vocalize the stories of the lived experiences of those who have been detained in Canada. Semi-structured interviews are planned to be conducted with approximately three to five participants who have formerly been detained in Canada's Immigration Holding Centres within the past decade. By doing so, this study aims to identify the stories that participants develop to explain their lived experiences before, during, and after immigration detention, as well as to explore trends and themes related to the practice of immigration detention based on participant experiences. This study operates in alignment with a critical realist view that what is important is not just to explain the world, but also to change it. Therefore, participant stories will be examined in depth alongside academic literature addressing the arbitrary nature of immigration detention, vulnerable persons in immigration detention, and the criminalization of migration, all of which will help delineate Canada's practice of immigration detention and inform ways to mobilize social organizing for reform. This work is important in the Canada context where immigration detention remains a hidden practice. Not only are detained persons physically kept hidden from the public, but Canada's reputation as a benevolent and multicultural country continues to overshadow the wrongdoings that occur under its detention practices. With the Canada Border Services Agency reporting that thousands of persons continue to be detained annually, this matter warrants contemporary momentum. Responsively, this study will combat the erasure of detained persons in Canadian discourse by giving a microphone to their voices.

Biography

Julie Kim (She/Her) is a Master's student in the Immigration and Settlement Studies program at X University with an Honours BA in Politics and Governance from X University. Her research interests include irregular migration, the criminalization of migration, and Canada's immigration detention centres, with a focus on vocalizing the narratives of detainees bound within detention centres. As a graduate student, she has assisted on various research projects which have involved organizing academic workshops, updating literature lists, and researching emerging scholars in migration studies. Julie is looking forward to continue gaining practical experience in this field of work during her upcoming placement with the Refugee Affairs Branch at IRCC.