

Social Control and Detention

Mary BOSWORTH (2008). "Border Control and the Limits of the Sovereign State." Social & Legal Studies 17(2): 200 - 217.

Concentrating on legislation passed under the New Labour government in the UK from 1997 until writing this article in 2008, Bosworth makes the point that detention underpins a new "criminal justice" agenda for immigration and asylum policy in that country and beyond. Bosworth argues that the New Labour approach was to attempt to reduce the numbers of arriving refugees while also limiting the possibility of legal, permanent migration to the most skilled labour migrants. These policies have been underpinned "at the deepest end by threats of detention." (210) She contends further that the advent of ever-stricter immigration and asylum controls foster local fear and mistrust of "foreigners" as threats to the British social order. Through profound state interventions that subject people to surveillance, control, and, ultimately, detention, resident non-citizens are criminalized and the frontiers of the British nation-state are shifted from the territorial borders into the community; paradoxically, however, this move of constricting the liberty of foreigners "may ultimately undermine the agency and freedoms of citizens just as much as foreigners." (201)

Further reading:

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