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Leanne Weber and Sharon Pickering, *Globalization and Borders: Death at the Global Frontier*

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The above insights are not exhaustive and will not necessarily apply to every person accused of organising smuggling operations. However, I would suggest they are more likely to be the norm than not and require us to radically re-think the approach to people smuggling. Fundamentally, the criminogenic role of border controls in creating the need to utilise illicit forms of travel and generating high levels of risk (see review of Weber and Pickering this issue) needs to be acknowledged. With that as our starting point, rather than the constructed criminality of the smuggler, genuinely humanitarian solutions, such as state facilitated travel and a significantly increased re-settlement program, can be envisaged.

Notes

1. See the Australian Broadcasting Commission's *4 Corners* program, broadcast on 4 June 2012. Available at <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/stories/2012/05/31/3515475.htm> (accessed 10 July 2012).
2. Per Mildren J, *The Queen and Al Hassan Abdolamir Al Jenabi*, [2004] NTSC, SCC 20302840 and 20302843, 21 September.

Reference

Kelly J (2010) *People Smugglers: Saviours or Criminals? A Report on 16 Convicted People Smugglers in Australia Between 2001–2006*. Sydney: Australian Lawyers for Human Rights.

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Leanne Weber and Sharon Pickering, *Globalization and Borders: Death at the Global Frontier*, Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke and New York, 2011, 248 pp.: ISBN 978-0-230-24734-5 (hbk)

The global tragedy of death at border frontiers fails to capture the hearts and minds of policy actors. Instead, responses of inhumanity occur through political posturing and ideologies that privilege border security. In the public and political discourse the human cost of these tragedies is severely neglected. Reading this timely book through my Australian gaze of deep despair at asylum seeker deaths that continue at sea, reinforces the need for a fresh policy approach that focuses on the human rather than the border. But regrettably compassion in Australia and elsewhere is at a low ebb and political manoeuvrings of restricting entry continue unabated, creating policies that lead to the loss of life on a monumental scale. *Globalization and Borders* tackles not only the loss of lives during journeys whether by sea or other means, but also examines deaths in detention facilities and deaths resulting from deportation.

For most observers of border deaths, the limited and sensationalised reporting in the media is a key source of (mis)information. By way of contrast Weber and Pickering, through meticulous research, present insights that are perceptive, compelling and disturbing. Although this book is a welcome addition to the topic of forced migration, reading about premature and predictable death is indeed painful.

Despite border deaths being a common phenomenon, receiving societies in their frenzy of border protection fail to confront causation. Moreover, public authority attention and media stories can be transitory and partial and divorced from global realities. As the collective memories of nations subside after the first flush of publicity following catastrophic events, the book fills this gap by producing the knowledge needed to halt the tide of deaths through demonstrating the futility and harm of current policy measures. Whether there will be uptake of this knowledge in the public policy arena remains a vexed issue.

The book contains disturbing accounts that illustrate how inhumane policies in many contexts generate deaths; policies are in essence invisible actors in their causation. The ways in which the borders between the Global North and the Global South are controlled means that deaths are in fact predictable and the failure to act morally is a contributory factor. The book goes far beyond a mere body count by demonstrating a direct connection between policies and the risks posed to 'illegalized travellers', a term that turns around the criminalisation discourse to provide a humanised representation. As such it contrasts with official versions that portray border crossers as duplicitous.

The concept of borders is described as including physical borders, invisible borders and militarised approaches. The way borders are constructed reveals technological mastery of external surveillance. Within the internal borders of states, detention and deportation reinforce the suite of measures to protect nations from incursion, while denying protection to the 'illegalized traveller'. Bilateral agreements that are never put to rest in Australia are another means of keeping borders secure, by casting aside the responsibilities of the nation of arrival to another country.

The book has many layers and I cannot do full justice to its outstanding contribution in a brief review. For me there are a number of elements that particularly resonate. A key question about border deaths is how they can harness the attention of governments and the communities they govern in order to raise the type of awareness that results in a policy overhaul. The book helps explain why the deaths of 353 asylum seekers on the asylum seeker boat known as the SIEV X, en-route to Australia in 2001, did not result in an outcry and the impetus to change political direction. Nine years later deaths at sea were differently received when in December 2010, around 50 people drowned directly at the border of control, at the Australian territory of Christmas Island where 'we', in this case Christmas Islanders, directly observed the tragedy and where Islander grief rivalled that of the survivors. Here there were bodies to convey the extent of the tragedy alongside the inconsolable survivors. And there were names. This contrasts with the SIEV X when those who perished were out of sight and out of mind. Yet although at first glance the deaths at Christmas Island appeared to engender compassion, this devastating event and others that followed failed to create a humanitarian response but resulted in increased political contest and moves towards even more strident border controls.

Other deaths arising from border controls also fail to receive systemic attention. When deaths occur in detention there is, as the authors relate, rarely an investigation of how the border policies are causal factors and the response becomes reactive. The same occurs with deaths by deportation in a number of countries that results in pragmatism alone, such as acting upon the nature of restraint, rather than questioning policy *per se*.

Early chapters focus on the question of counting and accounting and I will focus briefly on Chapter 2 and the nature of counting as 'statecraft' as this reveals how statistics are used to shape the politics of borders.

For the authors, counting is a flawed project. Faraway deaths that are not subject to coronial processes, such as the SIEV X, are forgotten deaths. Who is counted and who is not becomes in essence a political act in accordance with the internal operations of nation states. Deaths can readily remain outside moral concern. As there is no obvious culprit or investigation of the chain of responsibility, policies are devised to fulfil the perceived interests of nations even though it is clear that tough border control is not death preventing. Acknowledging counting as an inherently political act enables critical reading of the limited statistics that are available. A reasoned approach to data produces the robust critique that emerges in the second part of the book that offers the framework of structural violence, suspicious deaths and suicides and self-harm. I refer to two of the important contributions in this section.

First, many deaths cannot be readily attributed to specific individuals, but on further examination we find that a range of actors are complicit in the circumstances relating to the deaths. These include state agents, private contractors, people smugglers and border vigilantes. Although the chain of responsibility leading to the deaths is perhaps clearer than 'death by policy' this needs to be understood within political and legal contexts. Official depictions of the 'illegalized traveller' as deviant, dangerous and illegal, create the ideological domain in which the authorities operate. This results in deaths through 'crimes of obedience', the violence of forced deportations, vigilantes at some borders and criminal gangs.

Second, there is widespread absence of concern about suicides that occur with alarming frequency in immigration detention facilities, which the authors aptly refer to as assisted suicides, driven by unbearable desperation and despair. Internationally, suicide as a form of border-related death is most discernible in relation to failed asylum or equivalent applications and experiences in immigration detention centres and impending deportation. Research shows that suicide ideation is high. As the numbers are small, in relation to other types of border deaths, public authorities make claims that the cause is individual and not related to a chain of causation. Private contracting exacerbates the denial and responsibility. And it is not only completed suicides that are of concern, but also acts of self-harm, including hunger strikes, that have the potential to induce death but tend to be reduced by public officials as acts of protest or manipulation.

In public discourse, the outcome of border crossing is attributed to misguided personal choices by the travellers themselves, or the greed of ruthless people smugglers. There is a lack of questioning of the right of states to protect their borders without considering that the needs of the border crossers are likely to be greater than their fears of physical and policy barriers. The question of smugglers is significant. In the race to attribute blame for border deaths, the smugglers are the scapegoats and variability in their behaviours and motives rarely reaches public attention. As the authors explain, it is governments in erecting barriers to keep out the unwanted that has led to this lucrative market.

Leanne Weber and Sharon Pickering have produced an influential and inspiring book and have done so with a mix of passion, research rigour and high-level analysis. Who will benefit from this book? The book is global in focus but written by Australians.

This comprehensive account provides a much-needed international perspective for those working within specific country contexts. Particularly potent are the worldwide trends that in different guises are shrouded by similar discourses of illegality and sovereignty. What is particularly disturbing is that the deaths are predictable and hence preventable with appropriate political will.

For a book that deals with such a hefty topic, it is written in an accessible manner that will ensure its value not only to academics but to practitioners and activists. My hope is that the ministers of states and government authorities that are tasked with border protection will examine what the authors reveal, and find the heart to stand back from politics to produce humane and life-enhancing approaches.

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Lorana Bartels and Kelly Richards (eds), *Qualitative Criminology: Stories from the field*. Sydney: Hawkins Press, 2011; 251, pp.: ISBN 9781876067243, \$59.95 (pbk)

This edited volume is a needed addition to the relative dearth of work in qualitative criminology regarding the problems and challenges facing researchers in the field, in research design and implementation, in the ethics of research, in the role of the researcher, and many other aspects of qualitative research. Unlike quantitative research journals, which are replete with articles on method, reliability and validity, and other challenges or problems; and qualitative research in other fields such as sociology and anthropology that have more directly addressed both the practical and theoretical problems in qualitative research, qualitative criminology has been hesitant to do so until recently.

This has been the case not only in Australia, but also in Britain and the United States. While it is difficult to know, one can speculate that this lack of reflexivity as well as reticence towards opening up of the 'black box' of qualitative research is related to the degree to which criminology has been historically dependent upon other disciplines for its knowledge claims, as well as more beholden to and aligned with dominant and hegemonic forms of social power. Of course qualitative work in areas of crime, deviance, and criminal justice have long spoken to some of the issues set forth in this volume – one can think of William Foote Whyte's (1943) self-admitted blunders in establishing relationships with people on Boston's North End, or more recently the work of Philippe Bourgois whose ethnographies *In Search of Respect* (1996) and *Righteous Dopefiend* (2009, with Jeff Schonberg) demonstrate a reflexivity in research that eschews any claim to objectivity while linking the lives and choices of people to larger social, political and cultural determinants. The point is not that there is nothing new in this edited collection, quite the contrary, but rather that qualitative researchers have largely been required to piecemeal together such accounts themselves through disparate readings and/or insider knowledge of research. In this regard alone, volumes such as this one are useful and important as contributions to understanding how such knowledge is produced, and how knowledge claims are related not only to epistemological