In the wake of Manus Island border death: Dr Leanne Weber comments

Reza Barati, a 23 year old Iranian detained on Manus, died as a result of head injuries following an outbreak of serious violence at Manus Island Immigration Detention Centre last week. 62 people were injured during the riots and Mr Barati, lost his life. Despite these tragic events, it remains to be seen who will be held accountable for his death and for those who suffered injury.

In the wake of this recent border death on Manus Island, Dr Leanne Weber has written an article titled 'How legal is a refugee riot?', for The New Matilda, arguing that international human rights law is no where as accessible in Australia as it is in Europe, particularly for those in immigration detention. Read more here.

Did you know? Trafficking in Persons

More than 60 per cent of people trafficked for sex or forced labour within the European Union are EU citizens.

In Australia, between 2004 and 2012 only 14 people have been convicted of people trafficking-related offences (nine of the 14 defendants were convicted of slavery offences, three of sexual servitude, one of people trafficking and one of labour exploitation).

Of the estimated 27 million victims of human trafficking globally, only 46,570 were identified by government, law enforcement and criminal justice officials.

BOb Focus Project: Illegal workers and labour exploitation in Australia

Building on her extensive research into human trafficking, Marie Segrave has just received funding via the Australian Research Council’s Discovery Early Career Researcher fellowship program to undertake a three year project focused on labour exploitation and unlawful migrant workers in Australia. This project is situated within a growing body of critical work that is seeking to recognise the intersection of exploitation and il/legal migrant labour outside the dominant human trafficking framework. In Australia it is estimated that 50,000 -100,000 non-citizens are working illegally. Little is known about their experiences, their work conditions and the extent to which efforts to detect and detain illegal workers
may be impacting on their security. This research aims to examine migrant experiences to identify whether and how regulatory systems may be contributing to, or sustaining, exploitative conditions experienced by unlawful migration labourers, including trafficking.

Travelling with sexy underwear = sex trafficking?

The border is where “the document is compared to the body which is compared to the story” (Salter 2006:181).

In 2012, interviews with 15 immigration officers and 140 hours of observations at two metropolitan airports in Australia found that for Asian women with Asian passports, the ‘story’ is suspected, at times, to be trafficking and/or sex work. All but one of the immigration officers interviewed identified sex workers as the main example of the problem woman traveller (n=14/15). Women’s sexuality was scrutinised as an indicator of potential victimisation (i.e. trafficking) or potential criminality (i.e. working illegally by breaching tourist visa conditions).

Although this is a relatively small sample, the researchers, Sharon Pickering and Julie Ham, felt strongly about sharing these findings as immigration officers spoke about the following stereotypes or ‘risk profiles’ very much as work practices rather than personal opinions. What they found also reveals how certain groups of women may be treated at Australian airport borders. Read more here.

Researcher profile: Dr Marie Segrave

Dr Marie Segrave’s main research focus has been the area of human trafficking and migrant labour exploitation, with additional work in the area of policing and victimisation and women’s imprisonment and survival post-release. Her work in the area of human trafficking is part of a small but growing analysis of the impact of the policy response to human trafficking and labour exploitation that questions the design and enforcement of counter-trafficking efforts. Her concern is to highlight through her research findings, that border regulation, migration, labour demands and exploitative practices are intimately connected. Her research in the area of human trafficking has been identified as unique in the field. Read more here.

Higher degree student profile: Sirakul Suwinthawong

Sirakul Suwinthawong receives a scholarship from the Thai Government to pursue her PhD in Criminology at Monash University. She earned her Master of Arts in Human Rights and Social Development at Mahidol University in Thailand. She has always been interested in human rights work. She volunteered for Amnesty International Thailand and Action Aid Thailand during her Masters years. Sirakul is now a lecturer at the College of Politics and Governance, Mahasarakham University, Thailand. Her responsible subjects were Politics of Justice and Human Rights, Human Rights and Development, Human Rights in Asia, and Contemporary Issues in Human Rights Studies.

Sirakul’s PhD thesis focus is on the policing of female irregular migration and vulnerability: a case study of Lao migrants in northeastern Thailand. Her thesis will examine migration law and policy in Southeast Asia and Thailand in relation to irregular migrants. It will also examine the actual and legal situations of irregular migrants when they encounter abusive practices or violations of their basic rights.
Graduate news

Our graduate students are busy engaging in a number of research related exploits. Bodean Hedwards is currently in India conducting fieldwork with Tibetan communities, Julie Ham has been in the media spotlight commenting on the rumour that sex trafficking increases during popular sporting events as well as publishing a book chapter and Brandy Cochrane has been busy online with a published blog post and new BOb project website showcasing her PhD research. Read more here.

Photo via Idea Co

Opportunities

Charles Sturt Lecturer position in Criminal Justice Studies/Criminology

Charles Sturt University, Port Macquarie Campus, Australia is currently recruiting for a fulltime/fixed term, Level B Lecturer in Criminal Justice Studies/Criminology. Applications close Thursday February 27. More details here.

Call for Proposals: Citizenship Studies

Citizenship Studies journal is currently calling for proposals for two Special Issues in 2015. Proposals relating to and dimension of citizenship studies research are welcome. Find out more here.

Events


Criminological Horizons Public Lecture, ‘Researching Power and the powerful in a cold climate’ presented by Prof Steve Tombs, Open University and Dr David Whyte, University of Liverpool. Hosted by Monash Criminology, Tuesday April 15, 2014, 6-8.30pm, Monash University Law Chambers, Melbourne, Australia. Email Rebecca.powell@monash.edu for more information and RSVP.

Featured publications

Book chapters


Special Issue Journal


Journal articles

Required parameters are missing or incorrect.


BOb review

Published by Migreurop, The Atlas of Migration in Europe underlines the inconsistencies and the consequences of migration management in the European Union. Published in English for the first time, BOB’s Dr Alison Gerard has reviewed this important publication relevant to all border crossing scholars.

BOB’s Dr Francesco Vecchio has submitted his review of the European Visa Database, a resource developed to aid researchers working on migration and mobility control.

NGO news

Institute of Race Relations (IRR): Focusing on deaths of migrants in detention and the community

Our NGO partner IRR continues to delve deep into deaths of migrants through case studies in the European Union. As an anti-racist think tank, the IRR reflects on and shares perspectives of those who suffer racial oppression. An important part of their work, publications are booming on the IRR website. Interested in detention of irregular migrant in Malta? How about Australia’s neo-colonialism with its border program? Want to know more about the Immigration Bill in the UK? Find publications on these border crossing issues and more here.

Vision First: Forming a refugee union in Hong Kong

Occupy ISS is an occupation movement against the corruption and inequality set straight by a non-governmental organization contracted by the Hong Kong government to provide services to asylum seekers in the city. Vision First supported the formation of the Refugee Union that gathered protesters and helped with the organization and logistics behind this courageous movement. A Court injunction ended the occupation, at which time Vision First and the Refugee Union filed a complaint at anti-graft watchdog ICAC. Read more about the Occupy ISS occupation of government offices in Hong Kong to campaign for refugee rights here.

Feedback and submissions

We welcome your feedback and submissions for future newsletters, including information about relevant research, discussions or events.

Our focus for the next issue will be on Fluid Security in the Asia Pacific. If you wish to contribute, please contact us by emailing bcrossingobservatory@gmail.com.