BOOK REVIEW

Majcher, Izabella, Flynn, Michael and Grange, Mariette. 2020. *Immigration Detention in the European Union: In the Shadow of the "Crisis".* Cham: Springer. 480 pp

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Keywords: Detention; Migration; Immigration; Refugees; Asylum seekers

The book *Immigration Detention in the European Union: In the Shadow of the 'Crisis'* shows that detention of migrant populations has increased considerably in the European Union (EU) during the last few years. The book's value is multiple: It can be used as a sourcebook about the legal frameworks and developments in the different European countries, and it makes an important original theoretical contribution in regard to general trends in the EU regarding the detention of migrant populations. The authors of the book, Izabella Majcher, Michael Flynn and Mariette Grange, are all affiliated in one way or another with the Global Detention Project, a non-profit organization in Geneva that promotes the rights of people that have been detained. Part of the objectives of the organization is to disseminate information, which this book certainly succeeds in doing.

The book's text consists of an introduction, a systematic listing of recent developments in different EU countries divided into several chapters, and a concluding chapter. The introduction addresses clearly the central aim of the book: To show the increase of immigrant detention in the EU during and after the 'rhetoric' of a crisis (as phrased by the authors, p. 4) and its facilitation by policy and legislative measures taking place prior to the crisis. The authors point out that while there was a growth in the number of people seeking international protection, this growth was short-lived, and after a peak in 2015, arrivals dropped to pre-2015 numbers (p. 4). Prior to the so-called 'migrant crisis', the general trend in EU countries had been a decreasing use of immigrant detention. With the declaration of a migrant crisis, detention in the EU increased rapidly, indicating how 'crisis talk' motivates affects and actions (Loftsdóttir, Smith and Hipfl 2018). Even countries not directly impacted by this crisis changed their practices, as later exemplified in the chapter on the Baltic countries, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which became more restrictive in terms of immigration (p. 15).

The authors stress that the more restrictive measures were facilitated by important changes in EU legislation and policy both prior to and after the crisis (p. 2). Regardless, the consequence was that across the EU, 'detention numbers remained higher than pre-crisis levels even after the crisis itself had begun to subside' (p. 2). In coherence with scholarship over

the last few years (e.g., Fassin 2005), the authors underscore how this creates a shift to normalization of detention and securitization as the main emphasis instead of protection. As it is phrased in the introduction: 'The increased use of detention in response to large arrivals of people fleeing violence and conflicts also reveals an important shift away from emphasizing protection and towards risk management and security enforcement in EU policy-making' (p. 4).

Each chapter in the main section of the book consists of several country examples that are delimited geographically and have in the title a phrase capturing the general trend in that part of the EU (such as 'Central Europe: Declining Arrivals, Surging Antagonism'; 'Nordic Countries: An Uneven Response'; 'Western Europe: New Restrictions, More Detainees'). The chapters start with brief summaries that draw very nicely together the general conclusion from the trends in the countries grouped together in that chapter. Each country example within all the chapters is set up in the same way: starting with a brief outline of the main trends in regard to immigration, asylum and detention; then giving a somewhat detailed but clear picture of the immigration detention legal framework; a view of the detention center in each country and then finally their monitoring. Each section takes up various important issues under this structure, such as the treatment of vulnerable groups including children and victims of torture. This layout may sound repetitive, but it makes the book accessible and easy to go through, and it facilitates comparison across different regions, countries or categories. The book is quite long, almost 500 pages, but despite the length and repetitive format, I found it difficult to put it down.

The authors' good grasp of different statistics and contexts is evident throughout the book, where they often link together different sets of information. In Spain, the authors point out, detention numbers have declined between 2011–2015, which has to be contextualized with a simultaneous increase in so-called summary expulsions (i.e. expulsion from police stations within 72 hours of apprehension), as well as high numbers of refusal of entry of non-EU citizens into EU external borders (p. 322). Despite not discussing it very closely, the book mentions some of the islands ruled by European countries, such as the three islands in the Caribbean ruled by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, pointing out how they do not always comply in practice with legal frameworks and agreements on the mainland (p. 421).

The book, furthermore, vividly demonstrates how a part of creating Europeanness is through controlling migrants. One clear example is Romania, where the incorporation of EU legislation in regard to migration was necessary for the country to be eligible as a candidate for EU membership (p. 98). Several times the authors also show the irony in how the detention practices of Western European countries have been 'repeatedly scrutinized by the very UN human rights bodies they were instrumental in establishing' (p. 347), due to, for example, the detention of children and using prisons for detention. Countries in the Eastern part of Europe were during the crisis often seen as 'lacking compassion' while presumed moral virtues of Western Europe were highlighted (see critical discussion in Dzenovska 2016: 2). While the book talks about xenophobia and hostile migration regimes in some countries in Central and Eastern Europe, this book also exposes the multiple inhumane practices across Western Europe and in the Nordic countries. The five countries receiving the highest number of recommendations during the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in regard to immigration detention were, for example, not only those in the south and east, such as Malta, Greece and Hungary, but also Luxembourg and Belgium (p. 409).

The concluding chapter is short but draws important attention to how the EU has externalized their migration regime through promoting and financing initiatives in other countries. As the authors stress, this is not new, but EU efforts to promote detention have been a 'part of a continuum of policies and practices stretching back decades that link domestic

immigration control to externalization' (p. 460). Importantly, the authors highlight how the EU and their member states are complicit in the tragic drownings at sea and have become part of various human rights violations taking place outside its external borders. This last chapter emphasizes the importance of contextualizing the EU and 'Europe' as such in a wider transnational perspective through its multiple interconnections to other parts of the world.

I want to congratulate the authors with this excellent book that makes a valuable contribution to current scholarly research and public debates, providing a deeper understanding of the conditions that asylum seekers, refugees and other migrant populations face, as well as of the role of EU regulations in shaping different national goals and transnational trends in this regard. Enhancing the value of the book is the clear, jargon-free language that ensures its use reaches far beyond legal experts and selected groups of academics. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in migration and mobility issues; it is useful for students, journalists, human rights activists and academics alike.

Competing Interests
The author has no competing interests to declare.

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