

The “Need” to Control Human Movement: From Colonial Oppression to Postcolonial Immigration Policy

Jeremy Patterson

Abstract

Colonial powers were all about the control of human movement, particularly towards colonial territories under very strict regulations, whereas in the postcolonial world, the obsession tends to be to restrict movement to keep the unwanted out of successfully colonized territories. The former control of movement was done especially through slavery, and at times by way of genocide; the latter is carried out primarily through inhuman(e) immigration policies under the ruse of national security. Both types of control smack of authoritarianism and xenophobia – and ultimately trample on what should be considered a basic human right, that of migration. This article examines these phenomena specifically in the francophone context, looking at the recent novel *Soleils invincibles* by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba Ndiaye, who invents countries in which his characters, like so many human beings from the last 500 years of history, are thwarted at every turn in their basic but profound quest for human identity and the ability to choose where they go.

Keywords: migration, slavery, genocide, national security, identity, colonies, immigration