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THE LIMITS OF THE SOVEREIGN STATE: Strategies of Crime Control in Contemporary Society

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Abstract

The article offers a descriptive analysis of strategies of crime control in contemporary Britain and elsewhere. It argues that the normality of high crime rates and the limitations of criminal justice agencies have created a new predicament for governments. The response to this predicament has been recurring ambivalence that helps explain the volatile and contradictory character of recent crime control policy. The article identifies adaptive strategies (responsibilization, defining deviance down, and redefining organizational success) and strategies of denial (the punitive sovereign response), as well as the different criminologies that accompany them.

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