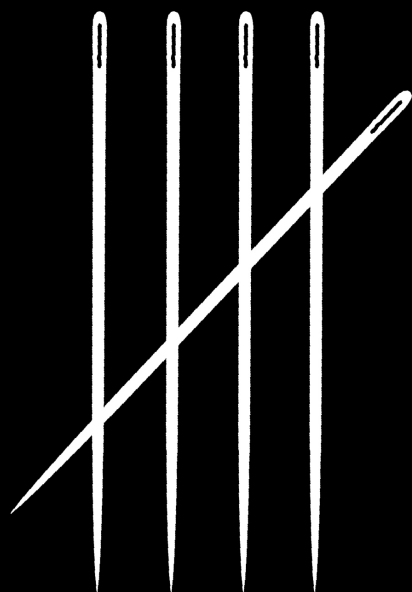




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**Deportations, Bans & Expulsions**

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STREGONI

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Deportations, Bans & Expulsions

*a cura di / dossier coordonné par / edited by*

**Andreas Oberprantacher & Andrea Mubi Brighenti**

*Guest artist / artiste présentée / artista ospite*

**Stregoni | Sorcerers – a project by Johnny Mox & Above the Tree**

*Editorial / Editoriale*

**Nicholas De Genova**

*The Autonomy of Deportation*

**Judith Welz**

*Deportabilities. An essay on the complexity of a social condition*

**Alexandra Délano Alonso**

*Revisiting the Concept of Sanctuary in an Era of Backlash, Deportations and Bans*

**Martina Tazzioli**

*The expulsions of humanitarianism. The hampered channels of asylum in France*

**Francesca Ansaloni**

*Multiple expulsions. Affective and material evictions in Calais*

**Lars Breuls**

*Immigration policy communication in Belgium. Portraying forced removal as a means for crime control*

**B Camminga**

*Catch and Release. Transgender Migrants and Opposite of Deportation in South Africa*

**Alessandro De Giorgi**

*Note sul Neoliberalismo Autoritario*

# EDITORIAL

In his book *La géographie du danger* (2006), Hamid Skif recounts the story of a nameless character who, lacking a valid residence permit, hides in the shadows of an attic while fearing his eventual discovery and forced removal. Skif's literary adaptation of the classic Anne Frank's diary is insofar significant for perceiving and conceiving the dramatic effects of current states of deportation practices, as it articulates a deeply embodied fear that is frequent among those who are alienated by being rendered more or less deportable. As Shahram Khosravi evidences in his study *'Illegal' Traveller: An Auto-Ethnography of Borders* (2010), it is perhaps one of the most paradoxical, if not perverse effects of the variable conditions of "illegality" that such conditions are generating *de facto* stateless existences that ironically exemplify "the impeccable citizen" (Khosravi 2010, 91), that is: citizens without any rights, the citizen as non-citizen.

Considering that deportations, bans, and expulsions are becoming preferred measures of "managing" subjects who for various reasons are discriminated as rejects, it is indeed mandatory to critically question how such measures are currently being intervoven with the precarious "fabric of human relationships and affairs" (Arendt 1998, 95). To address such questions is all the more urgent since (threats of) forced removals are not exceptional, but rather integral measures for dealing with some of the most pressing perplexities of our globalizing world. And yet, despite all the violence that permeates the efforts to install an atmosphere of fear, it is equally imperative to recall that people are not just surrendering to situations of misery and disenfranchisement, but they are also courageously assembling and vividly acting up in the name of democratic longings that traverse borders.

The present issue of *lo Squaderno* hosts and links

a series of contributions that document, discuss, and problematize historical and contemporary practices of deportation, banning, and expulsion. The political and legal scaffolding of deportation, its link to political economy as well as, more amply, its rationale — its philosophy, its architecture, its logistics, and its modalities — are examined across a plurality of contexts and a variety of details. Even if it may be the case that actual deportations are affecting only a minor part of a local population directly, its global repercussions are nonetheless so vast that it makes sense to argue that indirectly major parts of the world population are affected by the potentiality of deportation as a technique of governance.

From a social-spatial and a social-temporal perspective, such practices are particularly significant for studying the transformation and post-liberal administration of institutional settings— reflecting the intertwining of the 'humanitarian reason' and the 'securitarian reason' — but also the alternative arrangement of clandestine space-times: How are spaces created, maintained, policed, and reclaimed? How is mourning, grieving, remembering negated, and how are memories — against all odds — re-affirmed? How do deportation and expulsion act upon local place attachment, but also an affective geography of the urban space? Which imaginaries are associated with different forms of forced removal? What is the visibility of deportation across various social places? Which practices of resistance are or have been enacted in terms of spatial diversion, evasion, hiding, camouflage etc.?

The issue is opened by two theoretical contributions. Nicholas De Genova conducts a pronounced reflection on 'The Autonomy of Deportation', arguing that, while we are actually confronted with a global deportation regime,

deportation itself is never the real last word. In the following contribution, Judith Welz suggests to pluralize the notion of deportation in the sense of a plurality of situations and ways toward deportability. She argues that different social groups of immigrants are for instance hierarchized on a deportability continuum that is always differential and differentiating.

We then move to a series of contemporary cases where deportations, bans and expulsions can be seen ethnographically at work *in vivo*. In the context of the U.S., Alexandra Délano Alonso discusses the movement in a number of universities towards the creation of 'sanctuary zones' against deportation of immigrants from campuses. In the case of Europe, we have two contributions concerning different aspects of the famous case of the Calais "jungle" where refugees trying to reach the UK, the US and Canada have been stopped. Martina Tazzioli conducts a critique of humanitarianism as inherently functional to the deportation regime, whereas Francesca Ansaloni reports on the eviction policies. Moving to Belgium, Lars Breuls describes how immigration policy and deportation practices are rhetorically communicated by the government as attempts to portray deportation as a essentially means to combat various forms

of criminality. What is interesting is to observe how this narrative may appear robust even in the face of lack of proof. An interesting case study that further amplifies the geographic range of this issue is that of B Camminga who focuses on South Africa, where several transgender migrants from neighbouring countries are seeking refuge while being confronted with 'catch and release' tactics.

The final contribution advances a general reflection by Alessandro De Giorgi on the ideological context that often serves a discursive legitimization of contemporary deportation practices, namely, neoliberal authoritarianism.

While the cases tackled in this issue are limited, we believe that the number of theoretical insights to advance towards an understanding of and a resistance against deportation practices can be helpfully extended to many more contemporary instances. A historical, anthropological and psycho-social gaze on these phenomena could also be an important addition which unfortunately we were unable to provide at this time. We nonetheless hope that you appreciate this volume. Have a good read.

AO & AMB

# EDITORIALE

Nel suo libro *La géographie du danger* (2006), Hamid Skif racconta la storia di un personaggio senza nome, senza permesso di soggiorno, che si nasconde nell'ombra di una soffitta vivendo nella paura costante di essere scoperto e deportato. L'adattamento letterario di Skif del classico diario di Anna Frank ci fa vivere in prima persona gli effetti drammatici delle pratiche di deportazione contemporanea, articolando quella paura profondamente incarnata che è frequente tra coloro che si ritrovano ad essere "stranieri" e in stato di deportabilità più o meno accentuata. Come dimostra Shahram Khosravi in *"Illegal" Traveller: An Auto-Ethnography of Borders* (2010) uno degli effetti più paradossali e perversi delle condizioni variabili di "illegalità" è che tali condizioni stanno generando *de facto* delle forme di esistenza giuridicamente senza precedenti, che ironicamente esemplificano la figura del "cittadino impeccabile" (Khosravi 2010, 91), vale a dire del cittadino senza alcun diritto, il cittadino in ultimo come non-cittadino.

Considerando che le deportazioni, i bandi e le espulsioni stanno diventando misure preferenziali per gestire soggetti che, per vari motivi, sono trattati come scarti, ci sembra necessario analizzare come tali misure criticamente si intrecciano al precario "tessuto delle relazioni umane" (Arendt 1998, 95). Affrontare tali questioni è tanto più urgente poiché le (minacce di) deportazione non sono fatti eccezionali, ma piuttosto misure sempre più diffuse e normalizzate nel mondo globale. Eppure, malgrado tutta la violenza che permea gli sforzi per installare un'atmosfera di paura, è altrettanto importante ricordare che le persone non si limitano ad arrendersi a queste situazioni, ma resistono coraggiosamente e continuano a farsi portatrici di desideri che scavalcano i confini e che sono davvero desideri democratici.

Questo numero dello *Squaderno* ospita e connette tra loro una serie di contributi che documentano, discutono e problematizzano le pratiche storiche e contemporanee di deportazione, messa al bando ed espulsione. In questo numero vengono esaminate in contesti diversi l'impalcatura politica e legale della deportazione, il suo legame con l'economia politica e, più ampiamente, la sua logica, la sua filosofia, la sua architettura, la sua logistica e le sue modalità. Anche se le effettive deportazioni interessano direttamente solo una parte minore di una popolazione locale, le loro ripercussioni globali sono comunque così forti che ha senso sostenere che, indirettamente, una grossa fetta della popolazione mondiale è influenzata dalla possibilità della deportazione, intesa come tecnica di governo.

Da una prospettiva sociale-spaziale e sociale-temporale, tali pratiche sono particolarmente significative per studiare la trasformazione e la gestione post-liberale delle istituzioni - riflettendo l'intreccio tra la "ragione umanitaria" e la "ragione securitaria" - ma anche la gestione alternativa di spazio-tempi clandestini: come sono creati, protetti, controllati e recuperati gli spazi? Come vengono nascosti il lutto e il dolore creati dalla deportazione, e come vengono invece riaffermati? Come agiscono le pratiche di deportazione ed espulsione sulla geografia affettiva dello spazio urbano? Quali immaginari sono associati a forme diverse di rimozione forzata? Come si configura la visibilità della deportazione attraverso i diversi luoghi sociali? Quali pratiche di resistenza possono venire adottate in termini di deviazione spaziale, evasione, camuffamento ecc.?

Il numero si apre con due contributi teorici. Nicholas De Genova conduce una riflessione sulla "Autonomia della deportazione", sostenendo

che, mentre ci troviamo di fronte a un regime di deportazione globale, la deportazione stessa non ha mai veramente l'ultima parola. Nel contributo successivo, Judith Welz suggerisce di pluralizzare la nozione di deportazione nel senso di una pluralità di situazioni e di modi che producono la deportabilità. Welz sostiene che per esempio gruppi diversi di immigrati sono gerarchizzati su un *continuum* di deportabilità che è sempre differenziale e differenziato.

Segue una serie di casi contemporanei in cui le deportazioni, le messe al bando e le espulsioni possono essere osservate etnograficamente. Nel contesto degli Stati Uniti, Alexandra Délanò Alonso discute il movimento in alcune università verso la creazione di «zone santuario» contro la deportazione degli immigrati dai campus. Nel caso dell'Europa, abbiamo due contributi riguardanti aspetti diversi del caso famoso della *jungle* di Calais, dove sono rimasti bloccati i rifugiati che cercavano di raggiungere il Regno Unito, gli Stati Uniti e il Canada. Martina Tazzioli conduce una critica dell'umanitarismo come funzionale al regime di deportazione, mentre Francesca Ansaloni riferisce sulle politiche di espulsione. Passando al Belgio, Lars Breuls descrive come la politica dell'immigrazione e delle pratiche di deportazione siano comunicate retoricamente dal governo nel tentativo di inquadrare la deportazione come un mezzo essenzialmente per combattere varie forme di

criminalità. Ciò che è interessante è osservare come questa narrazione possa apparire robusta anche in mancanza di prove. Un interessante caso di studio che amplifica ulteriormente la gamma geografica di questo problema è quello proposto da B Camminga, che si concentra sul Sud Africa, dove diversi migranti transgender dai paesi limitrofi cercano rifugio mentre si trovano a fronteggiare delle tattiche di "catch and release" da parte della polizia locale.

Il contributo finale di Alessandro De Giorgi avanza una riflessione generale sul contesto ideologico che spesso serve a una legittimazione discorsiva delle pratiche di deportazione contemporanee, vale a dire, l'autoritarismo neoliberista.

Mentre i casi trattati in questo numero sono limitati, riteniamo che il numero di intuizioni teoriche per avanzare verso una comprensione e una resistenza contro le pratiche di deportazione possa essere esteso a molti altri contesti. Uno sguardo storico, antropologico e psico-sociale su questi fenomeni potrebbe anche essere un'aggiunta importante che purtroppo non siamo riusciti a fornire in questo momento. Ci auguriamo comunque che possiate apprezzare il presente lavoro. Buona lettura.

AO & AMB







# The Autonomy of Deportation

**Nicholas  
De Genova**

The desultory disregard for the human individuality of persons whose lives are travestied by deportation renders them effectively anonymous.<sup>1</sup> As ostensibly unwanted or undesirable non-citizens, their utter disposability appears to be finally and conclusively verified by deportation as a sovereign power's exercise in virtual "waste removal," a state's perfunctory and mundane act of "taking out the trash." Hence, it is no accident that, etymologically, the origins of the very word "deportation" would indicate a carrying away, a removal, a disposal (De Genova 2014). The actual eradication of the deportees' individual lives — their personal identities and life trajectories — emerges as a frightfully routine and prosaic fact of deportation, more generally. Here today, gone tomorrow. Out of sight, out of mind. Case closed. Thus, at least from the perspective of the deporting state power, deportation appears to be the final act, the proverbial last word.

From the perspective of the deporting state power, presumptively undeserving, unwanted, or undesirable — and therefore illegitimate and "illegal," if not "criminal" — deportees are pervasively figured as virtual human "rubbish," a kind of "garbage" of globalization, nameless "losers" in the high-stakes global game of capital accumulation and bordering (De Genova 2016). While deportations are plainly debasing and destructive for individual deportees, their loved ones, and their wider communities, the bureaucratic rationality that coldly executes such severely punitive measures as "standard operating procedure," and the consequently heartless disregard for the veritable cruelty of deportation for those whose lives are thereby derailed, convert a systemic violence into the simple and banal functionality of a presumptively efficient governmental apparatus. It is in this respect that I have elsewhere (2014) suggested that Hannah Arendt's idea (1963/2006) of the "banality of evil" is instructive when we confront and seek to challenge such otherwise routine "administrative" punishments as deportation. It was indeed the dehumanizing reduction of individuals into "functionaries and mere cogs in the administrative machinery" — as well as the reduction of others into the mere objects of its power — that Arendt deemed to be not only "the essence of totalitarian government" but also, remarkably, "perhaps the nature of every bureaucracy" (1963/2006: 289).

In the effort to see beyond the banality of the deportation evil, Nathalie Peutz (2006) issued the programmatic call for "an anthropology of removal," arguing in part for the necessity to investigate what happens after deportation and to ethnographically document the lived experiences and perspectives of the rapidly escalating number of people around the world who have been subjected to the deportation power, whether directly or as the proverbial "collateral damage" of such devastating processes of rupture and dislocation. Peter Nyers (2003/2010) memorably characterized the abject

Nicholas de Genova is a scholar of migration, borders, citizenship, race, and labor. Among numerous academic positions, he most recently held a permanent appointment as Reader in urban geography in the Department of Geography at King's College London, where he was also the Director of the Cities research group and then the Director of a research group on Spatial Politics. He received his Ph.D. in sociocultural anthropology from the University of Chicago. De Genova's new edited book, *The Borders of "Europe": Autonomy of Migration, Tactics of Bordering*, showcasing recent research by junior scholars, is in press with Duke University Press (to appear in print in August 2017). Apart from that he is currently completing three new books. Two are academic monographs: one on *The Migrant Metropolis*, and another on *The "European" Question: Migration, Race, and Postcoloniality*. The third, *Crossing the Line: A Memoir of Free Speech during Wartime*, addresses questions of political urgency for a much broader public.

[n.degenova@gmail.com](mailto:n.degenova@gmail.com)

<sup>1</sup> A longer version of this essay will appear as the Afterword in Shahram Khosravi (Ed.) *After Deportation: Ethnographic Perspectives* (forthcoming).

reverse diaspora of deportees as a “deportsora” and Daniel Kanstroom (2012), specifically discussing the intensification of the U.S. deportation regime, similarly invoked the image of a “new American diaspora.” Of course, neither is it the case that deportation ever ceases to produce enduring ramifications in the places from which deportees have been expelled, where their abrupt dislocation and absences continue to be palpable (Dreby 2012; 2013; Drotbohm 2015; Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013; Hasselberg 2016). Indeed, this regime creates a complex web of spatial and temporal interconnections across the planet through which migration and deportation increasingly entail a

succession of serial multi-directional mobilities and repercussions.

*This regime creates a complex web of spatial and temporal interconnections across the planet through which migration and deportation increasingly entail a succession of serial multi-directional mobilities and repercussions*

In spite of the sheer violence of the disjunctures and ruptures inflicted through deportation, however, ethnography confirms that those who have been rendered

the objects of this power persistently reassert their own subjectivity. Such ethnographic insights into the lived struggles of the deported (as well as their loved ones and communities) restore names and identities to those who have been subjected to deportation’s techniques of eradication, elucidate the enduring subjectivity of those who have been made the objects of such sovereign acts of state power, and illustrate the stubborn incorrigibility of human life against the myriad forces that would seek to enforce its precarity and disposability. Susan Coutin (2010), in her depiction of the post-deportation condition in El Salvador, has memorably characterized the common aftermath of deportation in terms of an outright “inviability of life.” It is indisputable that deportation inflicts a pernicious cascade of hardships and, commonly, a truly Kafkaesque multiplication of unfathomable punishments (Bhartia 2010). Time and again, the research verifies anew that the deported, upon their “return” to the countries of their ostensible citizenship, commonly confront new formations of suspicion, criminalization, detention or imprisonment, police abuse and sometimes brutality, prolonged surveillance, stigmatization, hostility, marginalization, destitution, and compounded precaritization.

Not only do many deportees come to be re-criminalized after deportation, they are often effectively re-constituted in the countries of their putative citizenship as newly un-documented persons and virtual foreigners. In many instances, as Coutin (2010) and Elana Zilberg (2007; 2011) demonstrate with regard to the deportation from the United States of Salvadoran “criminal aliens” who themselves never in fact migrated — having crossed state borders only as infants or young children and subsequently having spent their lives entirely in the United States, while yet juridically inscribed as (deportable) non-citizens — the veritable inviability of the deportee condition often entails a process of their “migrantization,” their “becoming migrant” (Tazzioli 2014; cf. Garelli and Tazzioli 2016; 2017; Riedner *et al.* 2016). Deportation into a condition of virtual illegality, exile, and abandonment in their ostensible “home” countries frequently compels deportees to seek avenues for migration back to their true homes in the places from which they have been expelled (even when prospects for such return migration trajectories are highly implausible). Strikingly similar processes of (re-)migrantization are evident in analogous work on Jamaica (Golash-Boza 2013; 2015) and the Dominican Republic (Brotherton and Barrios 2011), as well as in related scenarios such as Somalia (Peutz 2006/2010) and Cape Verde (Drotbohm 2011; 2015), but notably, also in research in substantially different contexts of deportation, such as the repeated mass deportations of Zimbabweans from Botswana (Galvin 2015). Expulsion serves in many cases to merely produce temporary interruptions and spatial diversions for migrants’ projects, which then compel the deported to re-mobilize as soon as possible (Khosravi 2016). These dynamics of post-deportation migration are all the more compelling for those who are deported to so-called “third countries,” where they have neither the semblance of belonging nor

citizenship, as in the example of asylum-seekers subjected to the European Union's Dublin Regulation (Khosravi 2016; Picozza 2017).

A parallel process of (re-)migrantization is similarly evinced by the ordinarily very tenuous efforts (when they exist at all) toward deportees' "reintegration," whereby these ostensible citizens come to be treated, upon return, as virtual foreigners. Of course, in the case of deportees who have spent nearly all of their lives elsewhere, as is often true in the Salvadoran example, deportees are actual foreigners in the countries of their birth and juridical citizenship (Kanstroom 2012). Given the common affiliation of deportation with the stigma of criminality, moreover, deportees come to be subjected to procedures and programs (both governmental and non-) that reinforce their more general marginalization and their construction as cultural contaminants, corrupting influences, social deviants, or genuine menaces to social order (cf. Drotbohm 2011; 2015; Khosravi 2016; Peutz 2006/2010; Schuster and Majidi 2013; 2015). Rather than a return "home," then, many deportees find themselves in what Khosravi has depicted as "a transnational space of expulsion, oscillating between redeparture and redeportation" (2016:178; cf. Schuster and Majidi 2015). Unsurprisingly, such a compounding of vulnerabilities for the deported tends to merely aggravate further the predicaments that make their post-deportation condition inviable, and reanimate the desire or compulsion to migrate. Indeed, for many, post-deportation migration — increasingly experienced as obligatory and inevitable — begins to plainly exude many of the key features of "forced migration."

Hence, we are confronted with a global deportation regime (De Genova and Peutz 2010) in constant eruption. In its convulsions of expulsion, on an ever expanding scale, this global regime has generated ever-increasing multitudes of deportees — illegalized migrants, rejected refugees, as well as "criminal" denizens — who may be subjected by the deporting states to governmental procedures of eradication, and who may likewise be castigated anew by receiving states, but who nevertheless persist — often against egregious odds — in their efforts to re-make their lives and reconfigure the stakes of their aspirations and ambitions. Such examples of endurance and perseverance ought not, however, be reduced to mere "resilience" (a rather compromised fetish of the neoliberal lexicon if ever there was one). Instead, the persistence of deportees must be recognized as yet another instance of migrant struggles (Tazzioli *et al.* 2015). These struggles may not ordinarily assert themselves in the customary idioms and forms of collective political mobilizations, and may remain largely imperceptible to state power. However, as Clara Lecadet (2013; 2017) demonstrates, deportees have also begun to repudiate their social anonymity and their political erasure, re-appropriated their experiences of the humiliation, degradation, and brutality of deportation, and emerged as newly organized and articulate political subjects. In this respect, erupting from within the global corridors of expulsion, the deported — maneuvering between nameless undesirability and audacious self-assertion and collective opposition — have begun to reclaim a space for their distinctly transversal struggles. Notably, this often means promoting a conception of freedom of movement that would be capacious enough to encompass not merely a freedom to leave but also to remain. Thus, in the post-deportation condition, we confront anew the elementary and elemental human freedom of movement (De Genova 2010a), and the incorrigibility of the autonomy and subjectivity of migration (De Genova 2010b). Much as the autonomy of migration instigates a contest in which state power never has the first word, what we may now conceive as the autonomy of deportation — an autonomy and subjectivity of the deported within and against their predicaments of deportation — similarly ensures that state power never has the last word, either. Thus, inasmuch as deportation is never reducible to a single act or event, we should likewise underscore that deportation seldom signals a genuine closure, is never truly a conclusion, and never signifies the last word.

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# Deportabilities

## Essay on the complexity of a social condition

**Judith Welz**

In the aftermath of the attacks on staff members of Charlie Hebdo and on a Jewish supermarket in France in 2015, two things happened which caught my attention as a deportation researcher: First, the young man Lassana Bathily, who had been living in France first as a *sans papier* and later with a renewable yet unstable residency status, was awarded French citizenship for saving the lives of Jewish shoppers in the course of these events. Bathily was thus honoured for his “courage in an exceptionally dramatic situation” (Cazeneuve 2015) by being transformed into a non-deportable member of French society. Second, many European governments were quick to amend their deportation laws to more specifically target so called radical Islamists. The Austrian government, for instance, lifted a clause, which until then strictly prohibited the expulsion of non-citizenship holders who had been living in the country since their early childhood. In the remarks accompanying the amendment, the government explicitly pointed to ‘the growing security threat’ posed by second and third generation ‘immigrants’ who return from fighting in the Middle East (Agenda Asyl 2015: 8).

These events struck me as indicators of how societal and political negotiations over who should be subjected to, or be exempted from, deportation closely resonate with changing political contexts, and that these negotiations are couched in broader debates over the very nature and core values of a given society. They made me wonder how different profiles of non-citizens are actually turned into ‘the object’ of a society; furthermore, what this has to do with more generalized social struggles over race, class and gender relations, the division of labour and the distribution of wealth, or the articulation of democracy and freedom.

I want to use the space of this article to discuss my conceptual take on the issue. My ideas are very much inspired by the concept of “deportability” by anthropologist Nicholas De Genova (2002, 2007, 2010, 2013) and my curiosity as to what it yields when fused with some insights of intersectional and critical border regime scholars and a specific materialist state conception.

### **The birth of deportation scholarship**

In many Western European countries, the 1980s marked the transformation of modern-day deportation (Walters 2002) from a measure of exception into a normalized practice of immigration control (Bloch & Schuster 2005). Neoliberal reforms, followed by severe economic crises in the Global South and East, as well as a number of civil wars led to complex movements of migration and flight towards Europe (Georgi 2009: 82-83). Using the argument of a relatively saturated labour market and capitalizing on a long-standing culture of racism against postcolonial subjects and migrants from former socialist countries, many governments adopted harsher deportation policies and accelerated enforcement (Bloch & Schuster 2005: 509). The change was so drastic, that deportation scholar

Judith holds a degree in Political Science from the University of Vienna and one in Social and Cultural Anthropology from the Université de Provence. Over the last years, she has interchangeably worked in research projects and for different research platforms and in counselling to asylum seekers. Currently, she is designing her PhD-project in deportation/deportability-studies and searching for supervision and funding.

[judith.welz@univie.ac.at](mailto:judith.welz@univie.ac.at)

Matthew Gibney referred to it as “deportation turn” (Gibney 2008). In the following years – and paralleling a general trend in migration policy to more rigorously classify, select and stratify migrants alongside numerous criteria (Atac/Kraler 2006: 35–36) – the grounds upon which non-citizenship holders could be expelled multiplied. Losing one’s job, failing a language test or even recovering from a serious health condition could suddenly push one down the *chute* (Goldring & Landolt 2013) of residence security.

However, while the deportation turn produced a remarkable rise in deportation numbers in the first two decades, from the years 2000 onwards, it might be better understood in qualitative terms, namely as the ready availability and

sophistication of deportation as a coercive state measure: While the legal bases and technologies for large-scale deportation were kept in place (Bloch & Schuster 2005: 508–510), a growing “number of people eligible for removal” (Gibney

*Deportability might be better thought of in its plural, deportabilities, pointing to the alternating profiles of subjects targeted by deportation policies over time and the stratified affectedness of deportable migrants due to residence status but also intersectional positionality*

2008: 149) never actually got removed. According to Susan Coutin, when “for all of its escalation, the inadequacy of deportation as a means of removing unauthorised immigrant populations that were vast in size [came to] scholars’ attention . . . the field of deportation studies was born” (Coutin 2014: 671–672).

### **Towards the concept of deportability**

Attempting to solve the initiation puzzle of deportation scholarship, many scholars turn to the liberal paradox. Liberal states, they argue, face limitations carrying out coercive state measures due to self-imposed liberal norms, such as human rights or the proportionality principle. Matthew Gibney and Randall Hansen concluded, that deportation policy today merely entertains the “myth” (Gibney & Hansen, 2003: 15), that states are still in control of their borders. However, Nicholas De Genova provides a different interpretation of why states do not execute deportation orders as often as they could. His concept of deportability holds, that sovereign state power is fuelled much more by the ability to deport migrants than by actual deportation. In subjecting a great mass of people to the threat of deportation, states act out on their interest not so much of border control, but of creating a pool of deportable migrants, who are docile from a political perspective and exploitable from an economic perspective (De Genova 2013: 1188). The state does this as “an instrumental feature of capital, its ‘political’ dimension” (De Genova 2013: 1188). The threat of deportation is permanently re-actualized by a “redundancy” of marginalizing and criminalizing speech acts against migrants (De Genova 2013: 1181), an “enforcement spectacle” (De Genova 2007: 435), in which “some are deported in order that most may remain (un-deported) – as workers” (De Genova 2007: 426), and an immigration policy, that is designed to subject all non-citizens to the threat of deportation (De Genova 2013: 1188).

One of the merits of the concept of deportability over other accounts is to acknowledge that by not executing deportation orders, violence is done, not abstained from. It is a violence that makes itself felt by the affected as the ever-lurking potentiality of an eventual uprooting. An uprooting from a concrete socio-spatial context populated with people and things, an uprooting from one’s world of life projects and dreams, an uprooting that is corporeal and often starts with the humiliating sensation of cold metal around wrists. Deportability thereby points to a relational link between state and migrants: “Deportability . . . marks the zone of indistinction between a condition that is (virtually) stateless and one that is positively saturated with the state . . . It is no contrivance or exaggeration, therefore, to say of the “deportable alien” that even though she is excluded from all political life,



disqualified from any judicially valid act, and yet in a continuous relationship with the power that banishes it – no life is more ‘political’ than hers.” (De Genova 2010: 46–47). Moreover, deportability introduces an economic perspective which is lacking in most liberal accounts. Unlike reducing deportation to the compulsive need of nation states to reproduce themselves via the control of their territorial borders, deportability makes the articulation of race and labour in the context of post-colonial modernity and global capitalism a key explanatory factor.

### **Taking the concept further**

In my attempt to analytically grasp the social processes that produce deportability and the multiple conditions and experiences it creates, I spotted some potential for refinement. One of the key claims of the concept is that all non-citizens are deportable, since it is a core capacity of nation states to decide over who to admit and who to expel from their territories (De Genova 2013: 1188). I have pointed out the (analytical) advantages of an approach that highlights the shared condition of deportability among migrants above.

However, there are also good reasons for broadening the concept in a way as to allow the various faces of deportability to enter the picture. In her highly praised work *Stratification of Rights*, Lydia Morris (2002) pointed out that migration policy is set up to organize migrant inclusion and exclusion in highly stratified ways, precisely by creating different residence statuses with different scopes of rights attached to them. Empirical studies, indeed, suggest that migration policy does its part in hierarchizing migrants on a deportability continuum: While it produces migrant subjectivities who are so acutely deportable that they have to mentally cartograph their immediate surroundings in terms of go versus no-go-areas in order to avoid potential police controls (Talavera *et al.* 2010: 170), it also produces subjectivities who are legally classified as deportable, but who cannot be expelled due to lacking identification (Paoletti 2010). In the case of the latter, the feeling of being stuck with very limited possibilities may be more prevalent than the fear of deportation. Moreover, migration policy also allows for a globalized elite of professionals to move quite freely between states without having to worry about visa arrangement, let alone the threat of being deported (Tabar 2015).

According to Regine Paul, deportation policy-making can be understood as an activity of boundary-drawing when policy-makers “allocate migrants into various positions of legality and illegality” on the basis of “inherent normative judgements about what is ‘good’ and ‘bad’ as well as the respective political ordering of relations in the social world” (Paul 2011: 26). From a research-practical point of view, these boundaries can be carved out as “the legal infrastructure” (*ibid.* 101) of deportation policy. However, other structures of differentiation, which are less visible, because they are so “grounded in” society’s “structure of inequality” (Lipsky 2010: 115), may be running through migration policy and informing implementation. Legal categories, as universally valid as they appear to be, carry logics of differentiation in them, which (implicitly or explicitly) make them more applicable to some groups than to others. According to Black feminists and intersectional theorists, “oppression and privilege by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, nationality” – and I would add (il)legalization – “do not act independently of each other in our individual lives or in our social structures; instead, each kind of oppression or privilege is shaped by and works through the others” (Garry 2012: 4). When in 2010, thousands of Roma holding Romanian and Bulgarian citizenship were deported from their camps in France, it became obvious, how the relative protection of EU-citizens from deportation is very much contingent on labour market participation, and a confluence of the social markers of race and class, quite probably also gender (see e.g. Caglar 2014).

To summarize: I suggest, that migration and deportation policy as well as administrative practices produce very nuanced notions of deportability, which target specific profiles more than others. Intersectional analysis is paramount if one wants to grasp the complexity of the various social conditions

as constructed and experienced in the context of deportability.<sup>1</sup>

My second suggestion for refinement is inspired by a materialist conception of the state, in which the state is “a specific material condensation of a given relationship of forces” (Poulantzas 2000: 73) rather than an instrument purely at the hands of the ruling class. Exactly because the capitalist society is so full of contradictions and opposing interests, the state provides for the terrain, where interest struggles are fought without putting the existing relations of production at risk (Buckel *et al.* 2014: 26–27). Societal power relations and antagonisms are, from that perspective, inscribed in the state and its structure, they are constitutive of them. However, the state and its apparatuses also possess a certain structural density without which it couldn’t achieve stability in the otherwise highly instable capitalist society (Buckel *et al.* 2014: 31). This density entails a strategic selectivity which favours the interests of the dominant classes, without entirely disregarding those of the dominated ones (Wagner 2012: 240). Stability is further achieved via political projects that become hegemonic with the ideological support of what Gramsci called intellectuals (Gramsci, referred to in Buckel *et al.* 2014: 32).

Migration scholars using such a state conception have taken several directions in their research. One focuses on the place of migrant struggles in the transformation of migration policy. According to Bojadzije, the metaphoric cracks in the walls cannot be explained either by the incapacity of border control agencies or by the simple complicity between state and capital, but by migrant struggles and how they break up and produce cracks in the existing relations of forces (Wagner 2012: 235).

Another direction investigates the transformations of the state after Fordism and how it has impacted migration policy-making. According to Fabian Georgi, in the 1980s, a number of non-governmental organizations, think tanks, universities, private security companies etc. began to sell their analyses, policy advice and technologies to state and supra-state bodies to help them solve the so-called migration and refugee crisis. Many of those new actors supported the idea that migration, as it couldn’t be stopped, should be managed in a way as to benefit sending and receiving countries as well as migrants (Georgi 2012: 154). What appears to be a rational and therefore non-negotiable new style of international migration politics, is, according to Georgi, a strategic project of several nation states to secure the economic and political interests of the dominant classes in an era of accelerated and globalized capitalism (Georgi 2009: 82–84).

Some researchers have shown, how the newly invested organisations harvest a strong interest of survival, which often serves as the first motivation for producing yet another report or handing in yet another project for financial support in a highly competitive arena of migration policy advisers and technology developers (Georgi 2009: 84; Ratfisch & Scheel 2012: 90). According to Didier Bigo (2008), more often than not, it is what the newest technologies spit out in data or what becomes doable in terms of practices, that is later processed into new policies, including profiles of threatening and deportable migrants (Ratfisch & Scheel 2012: 92). Looking at the political impact of liberal players like IOM, UNHCR or even grassroots activists, some scholars have pointed out that the very act of defining the good or the protection-worthy migrant and refugee is to simultaneously support the concept of their exclusion-worthy opposite (Bahl *et al.* 2012: 164–165; Hess & Karakayali 2007: 52).

To summarize: The presented materialist state conception allows for this complex net of actors and interplay of technologies, practices and discourse, all of which are part of creating deportable subjects, to be included in scientific analyses. This may help explain some of the cracks in the contradictory composition of deportation policy in post-Fordist states.

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<sup>1</sup> Nicholas De Genova certainly is aware of uneven exposure to deportability (De Genova 2013: 1188, 1191; De Genova 2007: 347, 435). Hence, when I aspire to broaden his concept, I am speaking for and not against his spirit.

## Deportabilities

Given my points of critique, I suggest that deportability might be better thought of in its plural, namely as *deportabilities*, pointing to the alternating profiles of subjects targeted by deportation policies over time and the stratified affectedness of deportable migrants due to residence status but also intersectional positionality. Furthermore, a concept of deportabilities could enable to grasp the contradictions and fractures in deportation policy-making and implementation and how they relate to societal power relations and struggles.

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# Revisiting the Concept of Sanctuary in an Era of Backlash, Deportations and Bans

**Alexandra  
Délano Alonso**

In the U.S., the expansion of an already enlarged deportation apparatus and the attempt to establish a ban against immigrants from targeted countries by the Donald Trump administration has generated a wave of protests and institutional responses from activists, lawyers and immigrant-serving organizations to local governments.<sup>1</sup> Students, faculty, and staff at over 190 schools, colleges, and universities around the country have mobilized to create and sign petitions calling for their respective administrations to declare their campuses sanctuaries, in response to policies that specifically target immigrant communities and have created fear, anxiety as well as real cases of abuse, discrimination and separation of families.

The sanctuary campus campaigns aim to guarantee the university's protection of undocumented and other marginalized immigrant members of the community, mainly by committing to withhold information from immigration enforcement authorities and by disallowing the presence of those authorities on campus without a court order or warrant. Beyond today's mobilization at the university level – which had, in fact, begun years ago but gained momentum after the election – there are almost three hundred cities, counties, and states that have declared themselves sanctuaries in order to limit cooperation with federal immigration officials. It is at this level that the sanctuary movement has come under attack by Trump, who promises to cut federal funding to any local or state government that adopts this stance of defiance.<sup>2</sup> A bill (HR 483) was also introduced in early January to cut funding from universities that declare sanctuary.

Many cities, universities and NGOs have backed away from concept of sanctuary in response to this threat, arguing that the risk of losing federal funding or of putting themselves in the spotlight is too high, or that the concept is ambiguous, has no added value or that it promises more than it can really offer. Yet, the idea of “sanctuary” has no clear or consistently understood and applied meaning. As Elliot Young puts it in a recent article, “Sanctuary is an aspiration, a statement of values rather than a statement of fact.”<sup>3</sup> Cities, universities, and religious congregations have interpreted its definition with wide variations. These many forms of sanctuary are in many ways part of the concept's strength, in that they offer adaptable forms of resistance to counter unjust exercises of power. By understanding sanctuary in its plurality, across history, across institutions, and across countries, we are not only better prepared to imagine and develop responses to challenge the discourse and policies that criminalize migrants and their families but also to build a future where the rights of migrants are made real across borders.

Alexandra Délano Alonso is an assistant professor of global studies at The New School. She is the author of *Mexico and Its Diaspora in the United States: Policies of Emigration since 1848* (Cambridge University Press) and co-editor of *Borders and the Politics of Mourning* (Social Research, 2016) with Benjamin Nienass.

[delanoa@newschool.edu](mailto:delanoa@newschool.edu)

1 An earlier version of this article was published in *The Avery Review*, No. 21, January 2017.

2 Tessa Stuart, “How Sanctuary Cities are Plotting to Resist Trump,” *Rolling Stone*, December 1, 2016.

3 Elliott Young, “On Sanctuary: What Is in a Name?” *Huffington Post*, December 2, 2016.



## Lessons from the History of the Sanctuary Movement

The sanctuary movement has a long history going back to medieval England — one mostly associated with discrete physical spaces such as churches to protect those escaping punishment or persecution for various reasons. As Eric Foner explained at a recent forum, taking the history of the Underground Railroad as an example, sanctuary is a subset of civil disobedience, which includes both legal and illegal methods of resistance.<sup>4</sup> At the core of such actions is the question of what the obligation is of the moral person when confronted with an unjust law. The same question can be asked of the very

institutions, like churches and universities, that stand for social justice and equality. How do we demand that their moral commitments are matched with action in the face of injustice?

*What is happening today must be seen as an outgrowth of the continued resistance over the past decade to a massive immigrant detention and deportation apparatus*

In the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s, four hundred religious

congregations around the United States helped refugees from US-sponsored Central American wars enter the country, having been denied entry by the United States based on the argument that they were economic migrants. Beyond providing them with a safe haven through shelter and helping them cross the border, churches stepped in to offer medical care and legal representation. But the movement was not simply about protection. It asserted a political position — it drew attention to the consequences of US foreign policy in the region, exposed its human rights violations, and challenged the US immigration system. This, eventually, led to the passage of legislation to grant Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Central American refugees and to the creation of a strong network of civil society actors, which remains active to date. Susan B. Coutin reminds us that beyond the protections offered to immigrants, the practice of sanctuary in itself, the forms of community created within the movement and the experiences of those who participated in it in different ways constituted a transformation in itself: “By its very existence, the sanctuary movement incrementally changed society.”<sup>5</sup>

The movement resurfaced in 2007 in response to mass deportations of undocumented immigrants. Instead of just transporting, housing, and hiding refugees, as the 1980s Sanctuary Movement did, the New Sanctuary Movement emphasizes the importance of communication and visibility — from publicizing stories, raising public awareness about the individual lives at stake, and pressuring for legislative reform. What is happening today must be seen as an outgrowth of the continued resistance over the past decade to a massive immigrant detention and deportation apparatus. The post-election revival of the concept of sanctuary, and the sanctuary campus movement specifically, is a powerful call to action, a symbol of resistance and civil disobedience that offers alternative pathways in response to the current political context.

### The University as Sanctuary

One of the arguments against the proclamation of sanctuary by universities is the confusion it creates among members of the undocumented community — it is unclear what it actually promises and may be interpreted as a certain kind of protection that is, in fact, not possible. Others have taken the argument further to claim that such a position may limit access to federal funding for public universities,

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<sup>4</sup> Eric Foner, comments at “Sanctuary: Social, Legal, and Historical Perspectives on an Activist Category,” Barnard College, December 8, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Susan B. Coutin, *The Culture of Protest: Religious Activism and the U.S. Sanctuary Movement* (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 1993), p. 5.



especially following Trump's promise regarding sanctuary cities.<sup>6</sup>

Although it is clear that there are legal limitations to what a sanctuary space can do in the face of a court order — which would make it illegal to harbor an undocumented immigrant or prevent their removal — the power of declaring a space sanctuary goes beyond physical protection. There is considerable complexity to be found in different degrees of sanctuary: from symbolic support, to safe space, to refusal to cooperate with immigration authorities, to short-term or long-term physical sanctuary. These various expressions of support for vulnerable communities recognize the need to create spaces where marginalized groups will not be mistreated and can express themselves freely. Most often, the creation of sanctuary in cities, universities, hospitals, restaurants, and organizations involves the declaration of systems, or practices, of noncompliance and refusal: that they will not request information about the immigration status from their staff, users, or members; that any such information will not be handed over to immigration authorities; and that they will not be allowed to search their premises without a warrant issued by a judge.<sup>7</sup>

Most universities have issued a standard statement of noncompliance, proclaiming that they will not share information or cooperate with immigration authorities without a court order. Although they have shied away from using the term *sanctuary*, these statements are significant as a form of resistance to unjust policies and a message of solidarity to the larger university community. The university's position as a sanctuary means that police action following immigration regulations will be met with forceful resistance by the community, even if the 2011 US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Memo that established universities as "sensitive locations" were to be revoked by the new administration.

Beyond the interaction with federal authorities, a declaration of sanctuary campus sends a clear message of support to vulnerable individuals within the community (not just students but also staff and faculty), to know that this is a safe space where the whole community is aware, informed, and ready to act to protect rights, not just when facing immigration enforcement authorities but in any case in which there is an attack against them, within the classroom or in any space within campus. Much work remains to be done across private and public universities to train staff and faculty and adjust administrative systems and bureaucracies in order to reflect these principles in tangible ways.

## **The Symbolic and Performative Power of Sanctuary**

Beyond the issue of compliance with immigration enforcement, students are increasingly demanding campuses where they do not have to confront racism or discrimination. There are concrete actions that universities can take to demonstrate their commitment to the inclusion and respect of vulnerable communities — in this case undocumented migrants — in everyday practice. By broadening the notion of sanctuary beyond this legal boundary of noncooperation with immigration authorities, we can find pathways for extending protections and calling for our institutions to act coherently with their discourse around values of social justice, dignity, and equality.<sup>8</sup>

While universities have already begun to discuss new protections demanded of them by undocumented students and faculty groups, the urgency of adopting and extending them is now more clear than ever. For example, the California Faculty Association (CFA), a union of twenty-seven thousand professors, lecturers, librarians, counselors, and coaches who teach in the California State University system, has called on universities to extend the meaning of sanctuary to housing for students unable or fearful of traveling back home during the winter break due to potential raids or encounters with

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6 See Rebecca Nathanson, "[Sanctuary Campuses Vow to Protect Immigrant Students under Trump](#)," Rolling Stone, December 20, 2016.

7 See, for example, the recent statement by the [Sanctuary Restaurants Movement](#).

8 See "[Resolution of the Board of Trustees of The New School](#)," November 22, 2016.

immigration authorities.<sup>9</sup> Such support is crucial for those who will fear attending school, seeking medical attention, or participating in activities that may appear to put them at risk of deportation. Columbia University and other universities have also committed to working with DACA recipients to support them with scholarships in the event they lose their status and can no longer work.<sup>10</sup>

Other proposals include providing health care stipends for students who do not have access to Medicaid and who cannot afford to pay for school insurance. Universities can also offer to have legal counseling available (and extensive to family members) on an ongoing basis.<sup>11</sup> And, as has been discussed in some places in Europe and in the United States, universities can offer free courses (online or in person) for undocumented students and refugee populations.<sup>12</sup>

While larger initiatives around public funding and legislation to protect immigrants are especially urgent, we should not underestimate the importance of “retooling” the functions, tone, and preparedness of the university to better address the issues faced by undocumented students.<sup>13</sup> The necessary support systems that underpin sanctuary environments can be bolstered by mandated sensitivity training for administrators, faculty, and security personnel as well as by avoiding bureaucratic practices or attitudes that limit access and voice for undocumented students in campus spaces and lead to discrimination.<sup>14</sup> In order to demonstrate the university’s commitment to support undocumented migrants and other vulnerable populations, information about existing resources should be widely available on campuses and on the web. The New School, alongside the New Sanctuary Coalition NYC, recently proposed a logo to provide a graphic identity for sanctuary to convey the principles and politics of the project, “as a radical welcome,” to be used by organizations, institutions, and individuals that want to demonstrate their support for or status as sanctuary.<sup>15</sup> Visualization amplifies the message of resistance of the sanctuary movement and is also a powerful symbol for the community — a marker for those who need this supportive apparatus and for their allies who are necessary to help expand the movement.

Declaring sanctuary is just the first step that allows us to make wider claims to ensure that this commitment is matched with actions, not just in support of undocumented migrants but for many other members of the community that face intimidation, violence, and discrimination: people of color, members of the LGBTQ community, women, and members of non-majoritarian religious communities. Miriam Ticktin has argued for an intersectional approach in the sanctuary movement that addresses systemic, structural political change: “we are not looking for a space outside a political order, but for a *new* political order: forms of local sovereignty are being experimented with, built from the ground up, with the goal of protecting the health, safety and welfare of all residents within their communities, regardless of immigration status.”<sup>16</sup>

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9 See “[Statement on Protections for Undocumented and Vulnerable Students, Colleagues](#)” CFA Board of Directors, November 17, 2016.

10 See Aaron Holmes, “[University Provides Sanctuary and Financial Support to Undocumented Students](#),” *Columbia Spectator*, November 11, 2016.

11 See “[UC to Expand Legal Services to Undocumented Students at Several Campuses](#),” UC Office of the President, November 14, 2014.

12 See Dennis Romero, “[College Just for Illegals? National Dream University Launches with the Help of UCLA](#),” *LA Weekly*, August 1, 2012.

13 “[College & University Presidents Call for US to Uphold and Continue DACA](#),” November 21, 2016.

14 See Carolina Valdivia, “[Post-Election Recommendations for School Administrators, Educators, and Undocumented Students](#),” *My Documented Life*, November 13, 2016.

15 See “[Urgent Call to All New School Students: Sanctuary Banner to Protect Immigrants and Other Targeted Populations](#),” January 5, 2017.

16 Miriam Ticktin, “Women’s Rights and Sanctuary: Sister Struggles,” presentation at Cardozo Law School, *Feminism in the Age of Trump*, March 2017.

## A Sanctuary Campus Movement beyond Borders

Coutin has also demonstrated the importance of the 1980s sanctuary activism as a transnational movement that spanned Central America, Mexico and the United States.<sup>17</sup> Building transnational networks of solidarity, not just through churches, shelters, and civil society groups but also including universities across the region is crucial in the context of mass deportations and forced return to origin countries. Among the challenges faced by those being deported are significant barriers to continue their education. Their need and right to protection and education does not end when they cross the border. Some US universities offer Dreamer scholarships that include funding from origin countries, sponsor DACA students' visits to Mexico and other countries, and encourage transnational networks with returned youth and civil society groups.

These exchanges reveal the importance of extending sanctuary across transnational spaces and the need for tangible support across borders. The BUAP University in Puebla, Mexico, a self-proclaimed "university without borders," demonstrates the importance of recognizing the needs of returning migrants with a similar approach to that of sanctuary campuses in the United States. In its commitment to support Dreamers' return to Mexico and to welcome them into the university, BUAP has established special Spanish-language courses, training programs to help students navigate the university system, and made a commitment to push for policies that facilitate the enrollment and validation of university credits from another country.<sup>18</sup> These are not unprecedented actions. Countries, like Mexico, have historically made similar commitments to protect intellectuals and students in exile, especially in the context of the Spanish Civil War or the dirty war in Argentina. This commitment must be extended to their own citizens who are forced to return the countries they left due to lack of opportunities and where they now face discrimination, bureaucratic obstacles, and limited opportunities to re-enter labor markets and continue their education.

To be effective and "real," the promise of sanctuary cannot end when students leave campus or when they cross the border back into the country where they were born (whether voluntarily or not). The emerging movement today cannot simply be a reaction to the rhetoric and anticipated action by the Trump administration; it has to be proactive to challenge the larger structures that have led to this moment and to speak about wider claims such as the right not to migrate — a right that immigrant organizations that once campaigned for the rights of refugees in the 1980s now focus on. More than an immediate defense against the Trump administration and its expected policies, we must target the inequality and the different forms of violence exposed and codified within our immigration system.

We should also be hopeful that just as in the 1980s, the sanctuary movement today can lead to more than just the proclamation of a safe haven; declaring solidarities across boundaries, within our cities, between states and across countries, as a step toward changing legislation and establishing networks of support. Universities and educators play a key role in expanding the sanctuary movement — they have the capacity to offer counter-discourse to dominant rhetoric, reaching further, within and beyond the university community, at a moment when it is essential to be imaginative and rethink the terms, concepts, and frameworks through which we address this issue.

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<sup>17</sup> See Susan B. Coutin, "From Refugees to Immigrants: The Legalization Strategies of Salvadoran Immigrants and Activists," *International Migration Review*, vol. 32, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 901-925.

<sup>18</sup> "La BUAP es una universidad sin fronteras," January 11, 2017.



*For the last six months, I've been a Sorcerer. I wake up quite early in the morning and check my email. Instead of my usual music contacts, I now receive messages from people like Suor Rita, or some other refugee advocates. What we do with Sorcerers. We play with all sorts of people held in immigrant identification and asylum seeker centres scattered all over Italy – then the project has then been extended to Paris, Bruxelles, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Copenhagen and Malmö. We do not have a stable band. It's Marco (Above the Tree) and myself. In each city, we play with different musicians from different background and different countries – above all, with a different sound. This makes each gig such a unique event.*

*We have now played with more than 200 musicians, all of them asylum seekers. These people live in a time bubble, a state of suspension, and it's quite frustrating for them. Our musical encounters on stage can be hardly described. There are moments when you feel things are really working, that something great and magic is happening, and you feel you have found your brothers since always. At other times, instead, it's quite awkward, the sound limps, rhythms fall apart*





*and the stage becomes a huge, desolate place.*

*But finally, music arrives and takes us away. The audience realises they're not just watching another politically conscious songwriter. All the difficulties we experience on stage have a deeper meaning: you see how hard is to actually meet with others who are different. It's a tough experience, it must be tough, and full of misunderstanding. Perhaps, only sorcery provides a viable ground to goo ahead.*

*This is the sound of today's Europe: Nigerian r'n'b rap with vocoder, highlife, electro afrobeat... what Marco and I add, from the background, is just blurring and multiplying the rhythmic clash. It's an eye-opening experience for us.*



*The single most fearful enemy is neither fascist groups nor Catholic ultraconservatives. It is nostalgia. Overqualified and underemployed European millenials are a nostalgic generation; in parallel, many young refugees from African and Asia are easy prey to a different but no less deadly type of nostalgia. Nostalgia strips you of the present and the future. It's only functional to marketing and politics. It distorts reality and destroys meetingness. The only nostalgia we have to learn, is a nostalgia for the future. The desire to make and experiment together, despite all the failures.*

*Sorcerers has taught me the freedom to risk and fail as a musician – even on stage. I have tried to challenge my own limitations – and not always succeeded. I want to be free to get it wrong, to get angry, to fail and start again. It's a constant tension towards meeting the others. Sorcerers is a field of magnetic attraction among individuals. Music has this power of creating a new physical space where people can be free and get in touch.*





*The next step: we would like Sorcerers to walk with their own legs. It's not necessary that Marco and I are part of the band any longer. Maybe there are already several Sorcerers bands around Europe. They could play simultaneously in different places. New paths, and who knows maybe also new careers, could begin here.*

*Finally, what e have done with music could be attempted in many other fields – education etc. So, we could have one overqualified precarious teacher for every ten immigrants, for them to get a fast and effective training. You don't need a sorcerer to predict that the denial of opportunities and encounters will only produce disastrous outcomes.*

*Johnny Mox*





# The expulsions of humanitarianism

## The hampered channels of asylum in France

**Martina Tazzioli**

22 March 2017, Marseille: Ahmed Ali, a Sudanese citizen who had been arrested by the police at the central rail station of Marseille on February 13, succeeds in not being deported to Sudan by refusing to board the plane. It is the second time in the span of two weeks that he manages not to be returned to Sudan. However, far from being free on the French territory, Ahmed Ali will be judged, before the Court, as established in the French law, of “obstruction to his own removal”. After being temporarily released by the Tribunal of Aix-en-Provence, a second judicial hearing will take place in the next few months. The deferral of deportation flights, generated by the firm and continuing refusal to board the plane on the part of migrants under deportation, has happened relatively often at the airport of Marseille between 2015 and 2016, although in the majority of the cases the removal has only been postponed.

Therefore, the suspended deportation of Ahmed Ali is not an exceptional case in itself. Its political salience relies less on the act of (deferred) deportation than in Ahmed Ali’s preventive illegalization. Indeed, he was caught by the French police at St.Charles rail station and transferred to the detention center of LeCanet, quite close to the city center, before having the possibility to lodge his asylum claim. This vignette, which speaks about a (suspended) deportation that took place because of the preventive illegalization of a migrant who arrived in Marseille to seek refuge, points to the need of unpacking the entanglement between the geographies of expulsions and the geographies of asylum. This piece focuses on the wide range of expulsion measures to which migrants have been subjected in France before and after the last huge eviction of the “jungle” of Calais. The forms of expulsion that I take into account here do not consist only in deportations from France to migrants’ country of origin but also in Dublin transfers<sup>1</sup>, and what I call the internal forced transfers of migrants across France. More broadly, I stretch the term “expulsion” designating through it modes of spatial displacement and measures of legal destitution that can consist in migrants’ physical removals from the territory but also in hindrances, restrictions and obstructions against migrants’ presence and against migrants’ access to the asylum process. Such a take on expulsions builds on the scholarship that highlights the unaccounted nexus between deportation and forced migration (De Genova, 2017; Gibney, 2013; Walters, 2017). Particularly, Matthew Gybney argues that “deportation is ignored” as a form of forced migration “because it does not violate the key-principles of a liberal-statist world order that is treated differently from other types of forced migration and accepted as legitimate” (Gybney, 2013: 118). Concurring with such a view, I push this argument further by widening and reversing it at the same time: not only can deportation be seen as a practice of forced migration; it should be situated within

Martina Tazzioli is lecturer in Political Geography at Swansea University. She is the author of *Spaces of Governmentality: Autonomous Migration and the Arab Uprisings* (2015), co-author with Glenda Garelli of *Tunisia as a Revolutionized Space of Migration* (2016), and co-editor of *Foucault and the History of Our Present* (2015) and *Foucault and the Making of Subjects* (2016). She is co-founder of the journal *Materialifoucaultiani* and part of the editorial board of *Radical Philosophy Journal*.

[martinatazz@gmail.com](mailto:martinatazz@gmail.com)

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<sup>1</sup> Migrants’ forced returns from France to the member state responsible to process the asylum application according to the Dublin Regulation.



a broader range of practices of expulsion that do not always entail removal from the territory but that produce effects of containment through forced mobility, meaning by that the obstructions put into place against migrants' presence and movements and modes through which their geographies are diverted and decelerated.

An insight into the French context enables bringing attention to forms of *containment through forced mobility* and to a variety of expulsions measures that obstruct migrants' presence on the territory, that can result into deportations, internal displacements or preventive legal destitution (denial of access to

*By trap of humanitarianism I mean the way in which humanitarian discourses and interventions are mobilized for convincing migrants to move from Calais or Paris to hosting centers, from where they had been deported or “Dublined”*

the asylum procedure). In particular, I am interested in exploring how modes of expulsion — both as forced removal and as spatial and legal displacement — are entangled with humanitarianism in a twofold way. On the one side, both deportations and forced returns of Dubliners have

been made through what I call the “traps of humanitarianism” (Tazzioli, 2016). By trap of humanitarianism I mean the way in which humanitarian discourses and interventions are mobilized for convincing migrants to move from Calais or Paris to hosting centers, from where they had been deported or “Dublined”. Thus, in this first sense, we can speak of expulsions through humanitarian interventions. On the other side, the entanglement between expulsions and humanitarianism consists in the preventive denial in accessing the asylum procedure. That is, many migrants have preventively illegalized, becoming in this way “deportable” (De Genova, 2004), by obstructing them, in a direct or in an indirect way, from the possibility of lodging an asylum claim, as it has been the case with Ahmed Ali.

## **Expulsions and the traps of humanitarianism**

One year before the most recent and massive eviction of the *jungle* of Calais, a surge of migrant displacement measures took place. The strategy of “emptying” Calais from migrants was initially implemented by French authorities through a series of repeated arrests made in the city of Calais between October and November 2015. On these occasions, migrants were transferred by force in small groups to detention centres across France. Yet, once in detention, migrants were usually released after few days and then managed to go back to Paris and to Calais with their own means. Some migrants have been forced to restart their journey towards Calais, from southern or western France four or five times; in this way their unauthorised presence on the territory was governed through internal displacement and by keeping them on the move, more than by detaining or blocking them. After the first series of arrests, in November 2015 French authorities changed the strategy for temporarily “emptying” Calais and Paris, shifting from engaging in migrant forced transfers to detention centres towards humanitarian traps: migrants in Calais and in Paris had been approached by people from the local Prefectures and from humanitarian organisations such as France Terre d’Asile who tried to encourage them to move to *centres de répit* — literally, *centers of rest* — a new nomenclature introduced by France in 2015 to designate hosting centres for asylum seekers. Nevertheless, whilst migrants were convinced to go there with the promise of receiving assistance and protection, actually after arriving in those centres some had been returned by force to Italy under the Dublin Regulation.

*Mise à l’abri* — literally, *giving a shelter* — is the French expression used in official discourses and institutional documents for justifying the eviction temporary “migrant camps”<sup>2</sup> — namely, self-organised spaces of refuge and transit, in particular inside the city of Paris — such as the occupation

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<sup>2</sup> This is the denomination given by the French Home Office. See [https://www.gisti.org/IMG/pdf/min\\_int\\_logement\\_2016-07\\_charte\\_fonctionnement\\_cao.pdf](https://www.gisti.org/IMG/pdf/min_int_logement_2016-07_charte_fonctionnement_cao.pdf)

of the square at La Chapelle neighbourhood, the self-organised tent camps near the metro stations Stalingrad and of Jaures. Upon the eviction of Calais, which took place in October 2016, migrants have been moved to Centres of Hosting and Orientation (CAOs), which replaced the *centres de répit*. Expulsions through the “traps of humanitarianism” have become the main way for the French state to get rid of migrants and to avoid of taking in charge them as asylum seekers. Indeed, migrants have been transferred from Calais and, simultaneously, from Paris, through a mix of force and humanitarian persuasion: they were not allowed to remain in the *jungle*, so actually the only possible option was to move to one of the 240 CAOs across France; yet, they were also pledged not to be returned to Italy, under the Dublin Regulation<sup>3</sup>. Nonetheless, few weeks after the eviction, the first forced returns to Italy took place, and the government estimated that about 73% of the migrants evicted from Calais could be put in the Dublin procedure<sup>4</sup>. Simultaneously, few Sudanese and Eritrean migrants have been deported to their country of origin, although in some cases deportations have been suspended or deferred, like in the case of Ahmed Ali. Firstly, through the eviction of the of the Calais jungle, migrants’ presence has been invisibilized, as migrants have been scattered across the territory, being taken to the CAOs. Thus, in order to grasp how the machine of expulsions has been working and how migrants’ lives and movements have been affected by that, we should bring attention to what happened beyond the scene of the humanitarian-police eviction and to the invisibilization of migrants’ presence. Secondly, both actual deportations and the condition of deportability (De Genova, 2017) feared by migrants visibly increased. Due to the criticisms raised by NGOs and activist networks in the face of migrants being “Dublined” to Italy, a national directive released in March 2017 stated that for the migrants coming from Calais the local prefectures should not apply the Dublin Regulation. Yet, this sort of territorial excision predicated upon migrants’ spatial presence (Hyndnman, Mountz, 2008) — Calais as a critical migration site — was limited to Calais only, and to the migrants who were blocked there (“le Calaisiens”, as the French authorities call them).

### **Legal destitution and spatial displacement: the preventive obstructions to the channels of the asylum**

Together with returns and deportations made through the traps of humanitarianism, which consist in forced removals from the French territory, expulsions without removal — as legal destitution and spatial displacement — have been multiplied through direct and indirect measures for hampering migrants from claiming asylum. By direct measures I mean operations of preventive illegalization of potential asylum seekers: more than 200 migrants from different nationalities have received an Obligation to leave the French territory (OQTF) between June and September 2016, before having the possibility to lay their asylum claim, and this way being preventively expelled from the channels of the asylum. More indirectly, migrants have to queue and wait for weeks before lodging their asylum claim. “I arrived in Paris three weeks ago and I haven’t managed to enter the Hidalgo Centre yet”, an Afghani migrant told me while he camping in the street, outside the recently opened “humanitarian center of transit”<sup>5</sup> near La Chapelle metro station. “Only when there will be free places inside, some

3 In December 2016, 2440 migrants who were hosted in the CAOs were under the Dublin procedure. See <http://www.lacimade.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/hilan-cao-OFIL-29-Décembre-2016.pdf>

4 In 2016 40,800 asylum claims have been processed according to the ordinary procedure, 17,900 migrants have been instead put in the Dublin procedure and 18,700 in the accelerated procedure. This means that about 36,000 asylum seekers won’t receive any form of protection and some will be deported or returned. To this, we must add those that, placed in the ordinary procedure, will be denied of asylum. See [http://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/resources/les-demandes-d\\_asile-en-2016\\_16\\_janvier-2017.pdf](http://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/resources/les-demandes-d_asile-en-2016_16_janvier-2017.pdf)

5 The center of humanitarian transit opened in November 2016, near La Chapelle metro station, in Paris. It is the first hosting center for migrants in Paris, and it can officially host up to 400 migrants. This hosting center has been strongly criticised by NGOs and activists because it works in part as a center of identification — migrants who enter are obliged to give their fingerprints — and as a very exclusionary space — outside the center migrants queue for days before entering and cannot

of us will manage to enter and, after being fingerprinted, we will be allowed to claim asylum at the local prefecture"<sup>6</sup>. Thus, even if migrants are not illegalized with a decree of expulsion, the tactic of indefinite deferral through which they are managed — by not being allowed to claim asylum — makes them subjected to deportation and increases the possibility of being caught in the street as *sans papier*. This temporality of indefinite deferral of asylum applications goes together with the rapid temporality of arrests that materially hamper migrants from becoming asylum seekers, as in the case of Ahmed Ali from Sudan, who had been caught and declared deportable before he could declare his intention to claim asylum.

## Conclusion

An insight into the current French context enables bringing to the fore the entanglement between humanitarianism and the modes of expulsions — with and without spatial removal. This is articulated in a twofold way. On the one hand, through what I have called here *expulsions of humanitarianism*, namely, direct and indirect measures of expulsion from the spaces of the asylum, through preventive illegalization or by hampering migrants from claiming asylum. On the other hand, humanitarianism can be used as a way for cheating and convincing migrants to move to hosting centres, from where some of them have been returned by force to Italy, on the basis of the Dublin Regulation (*expulsions through humanitarianism*). By using the term “expulsions” instead of “deportations” I have pointed to a broad range of modes through which migrants are obstructed from the legal and effective possibility to stay in France. These can include forced removal from the territory towards the country of origin (deportations), forced returns to the EU country which is responsible for the asylum claim (Dublin transfers) or preventive expulsions from the space of the asylum — predicted upon forms of containment through mobility. In other words, expulsions are not necessarily about physical removal from the national territory; instead, they can consist in the subtraction of a legal and safe space to stay, generating migrant erratic movements, beyond modes of “geographical fixation” (Foucault, 2016).

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stay there for more than ten days. For the purpose of this intervention, it cannot pass unnoticed that this center has been named “humanitarian centre of transit” by the French authorities.

6 Interview with S., an Afghani migrant, outside the Hidalgo Centre, Paris, February 9, 2017.





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# Multiple expulsions

## Affective and material evictions in Calais

**Francesca Ansaloni**

In her recent work Sassen refers to expulsions as the planned and implemented removal from political, economic or social spaces of a growing number of individuals, who find themselves thrown out of a spatial and temporal dimension that protected and supported them (Sassen 2014). Understanding territory as one's own *chez soi*, a block of space-time that has been built for self-preservation, and expulsion as the non-negotiable wrecking of one's territory, we can look at the repetitive process of territorialisation-expulsion-deterritorialisation-reterritorialisation as a continuum that is relentlessly ruptured and need constantly to be recomposed by those who have to face their own refuge's dismantling. In the case of a camp settled by people on the move — asylum seekers, migrants, and undocumented people — the overlapping of many possible conditions of expulsion multiplies the processes of negotiation with which individuals have to engage in order to establish a new refuge once theirs has been taken over.

In the migrant camp of Calais, dismantled in the autumn 2016, the inhabitants had to confront with several expulsions that were both spatial and temporal, both material and affective. Since the first tents were set up at the end of March 2015, the makeshift camp grew fast and the first partial cleansing was brought about by the French state in January 2016. The motorway that leads to the port of Calais, from which the lorries board in their way to the UK, runs ironically along the camp. Most of the people who lived there desired to cross the Channel and build a new life in the UK. To this end, they made the most of any opportunity coming their way, especially a tailback of lorries, either fortuitous or induced. When these events become recurrent, the clashes between migrants and the police escalated, and tear gas canisters were thrown on a daily basis along the edge of the camp, where many people had their tents.

The French state thus decided to clear a 100 metres-wide area in proximity of the motorway, and people resettled in other areas of the camp. Less than two months later, the eviction of half of the camp was announced and, despite a legal battle brought to the court to block the decision, the second partial dismantling was achieved. This time, most of the people were displaced to the spared area, but others left the camp or resettled into the state-led camp of containers, which was opened in January 2016 in proximity to host up to 1,500 people. The camp was completely evacuated at the end of October 2016. Its inhabitants, at least most of them, were displaced over hundreds of *Centres d'Accueil et Orientation* (CAO) throughout France, from where they were supposed to reflect on the possibility of claiming for asylum in France, thus giving up with the British plan.

Besides the three spatial and material expulsions the people of the Calais camp suffered before being scattered to be invisibilised from the over-mediatised and supra-visible Calais, they also were exposed to the dismissal of other territories as material as the camp itself. The first one is a kind of

Francesca Ansaloni is PhD fellow in Regional Planning and Public Policy at IUAV University of Venice (Italy). Her research is focused on the political becoming of bodies through the analysis of the territorial and affective dimension of sociospatial processes. Her work crosses the fields of urban studies, human geography and planning theory engaging with issues of materiality, affect, and ethics.

[f.ansaloni@stud.iuav.it](mailto:f.ansaloni@stud.iuav.it)



paradox of the biopolitical. It is the biopolitical territorialisation of a biopolitical territory, the biopolitical to the  $n^{\text{th}}$  degree: the politics of “humanity and firmness”, or what Fassin has termed “ambivalent hospitality” (Fassin 2012). In January 2016 the French state provided 2,500 meals everyday and about 2,200 sleeping accommodations for the migrants in Calais. That was not the number of inhabitants of the camp at that moment — which was probably comprised between 3,700 and 5,000<sup>1</sup> — it was instead the number of people who were allowed to receive humanitarian assistance from the French state, the remainders being fed and accommodated with the aid of non-profit organisations.

*When the eviction was ordered, the issue at stake between the state and the main aid groups was based on an affective territory*

The French state had drawn visible and marked boundaries that showed their political territory: a camp of white containers encircled by a fence and with limited and controlled access via a biometrical device; narratives about the necessity of reducing the pressure on Calais by

creating welcome centres for asylum seekers (CAOs) throughout France; a relentless medievalisation of Calais through walls, fences, and police patrols. For the French state, the number of migrants in Calais was that which ought to be. A biopolitical apparatus of humanity was set up to provide some basic needs to that established number of people. The firmness of the state was a different narrative of the same apparatus, which was territorialised on police officers’ anti-riot equipment, water cannons, the continued presence at the entrance of the makeshift camp, tear gas and robber bullets, and the underlying threat of eviction.

Migrants who entered in relation, at least temporarily, with the apparatus of humanity, could at any time get caught into the other one, which was on the same continuum, a sort of Möbius strip without interruption. They could find refuge during the day in a heated container, and be teargassed or beaten during the night along the motorway while trying to climb a lorry. Or they could get some food one day and be expelled from their shack the following day. The remainders, those who did not count even as numbers, were completely excluded from the humanitarian management of the state. For most of them, the refuge was their own body and the relations it could establish with the assemblage of the camp. The *ambivalent hospitality* implied that, in the precarious block of space-time which was the makeshift camp, people were not submitted to police controls. The police rarely entered in the camp, for protocol reasons, so the risk of harassment was much higher outside than inside the camp. Migrants were somehow safer in Calais then elsewhere in France, on condition that they stayed where the state wanted them to, namely in the camp. The inclusion in the camp was the premise of their banning from freedom of movement outside.

A camp is a space of multiple sovereignties, not of only the state authorities’ (Ramadan 2013). This means that processes of territorialisation are relentlessly produced and reproduced by many different bodies. The aid groups had established their territory according to a logic of intervention focused mainly on the humanitarian response and a strong narrative about the *refugees* as first and foremost human beings, which classified their needs as corporeal and material. Both the practices and the narrative, I argue, contributed to depoliticise migrants and reterritorialise their political stances on a struggle of subsistence (Malkki 1996). Before the cleansing of the southern area of the makeshift camp, the initially chaotic and scattered practices of aid had already turned into an organised rhythm of distributions, meetings, management of human resources, and confrontations with the state sovereignty over humanitarian responsibilities. When the eviction was ordered, the issue at stake between

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<sup>1</sup> An official census of the people in the camp of Calais was never realised. The French state and the aid groups conducted their own census, which provided very different numbers.

the state and the main aid groups was based on an affective territory. Aid groups took the state to court to contest the dismantlement, on the grounds that the state was going to expel thousands of people from their homes, which were their place of life (*lieu de vie*), without providing alternative solutions. The state won and the judge mandated that the area be evicted from tents and shacks, with the exception of the places of life, which included only the collective spaces with cultural and religious functions. The outcome was a church, a theatre, a school, two information centres, and a centre for women, scattered in the middle of a wasteland. The trial had ironically conferred a political dimension to a request that was mainly humanitarian. When, a few days after the court decision, a group of about ten Iranian guys sewed their lips and went on hunger strike, their protest, even if well displayed in the media, passed politically unnoticed. The Iranian group's aim was to start a movement of resistance that could involve more migrants, but with all the residents and volunteers busy with the displacement of their temporary homes to the safe northern area, the group was alone in its struggle and ended the strike in two weeks.

In Calais, the political was regularly expelled to leave room for the humanitarian. The intensity of the assemblage of the camp was channelled and directed to its own survival, that is to the autopoietic prolongation of its deeply affective atmosphere. As one activist put it, "Some of the NGO's and volunteer groups behave as if the whole thing was a natural catastrophe . . . but in my opinion it is a political crisis, it's man-made and the solution can only be political."<sup>2</sup> The imagining of refugees was affectively contributing to this dismissal. Mainly among the volunteers, but spreading through the media and affecting the migrants themselves, the image of *refugees* as bare lives in need for any basic supply, waiting for the volunteer to take care of them and the individual donor to contribute from distance, was a powerful one. In a Spinozian perspective, images are modes of thinking and knowing (Spinoza 2009). This way, the residents of the camp were apprehended as a compact and homogeneous multitude in desperate need of everything for surviving and the huge humanitarian response was orchestrated accordingly, depriving them of their political voice and stabilising an identity which did not exist as such in reality. To what Arendt (1958) calls "the expulsion of humanity", that is the expulsion of the stateless and the outlawed from access to any kind of right, the humanitarian narrative added the expulsion of the political stakes that people of the Calais camp carried with them.

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<sup>2</sup> Quote from activist and academic Sara Zavaree, Kings College of London. Part of the exposition "Call me by name: stories from Calais and beyond" held at the Migration Museum in London between 2 and 22 June 2016.





# Portraying forced removal as a means for crime control. On immigration policy communication in Belgium

**Lars Breuls**

## **An intensifying ‘crimmigration process’**

Restrictive immigration laws – and the consequent labelling of those who do not comply with the restrictive rules as ‘illegal’ – emerged in Belgium from the 1930s onwards, but gained momentum after the 1973 oil crisis. Nowadays, the forced removal of irregular migrants is considered the keystone of this restrictive immigration policy and immigration detention has become the key instrument in facilitating the forced removal of irregular migrants. Anglo-American scholars have thoroughly documented contemporary trends of criminalisation of immigration (see e.g. Bosworth & Guild, 2008), the managing of migration through crime control (Chacon, 2009) and the corresponding incorporation of criminal justice norms in the sphere of immigration control without incorporating the associated procedural guarantees (Legomsky, 2007). Yet, at least with regard to the Belgian situation, a historical picture suggesting complete separation between crime control and migration control (see e.g. Sklansky, 2012) is not credible. Banning ‘indigent’ and ‘criminal’ migrants from the territory were already two of the few aims of Belgium’s 19th-century immigration policy (Caestecker, 2000): between 1835 and 1913, more than 38,000 non-nationals were deported from Belgium following the commission of criminal acts (Coupain, 2003). However, the ‘crimmigration process’ (Stumpf, 2006) has undoubtedly intensified in the current restrictive immigration climate.

Indeed, removal policies are nowadays primarily directed towards irregular migrants who have committed criminal acts. Although every person residing in Belgium without a residence permit can be subject to forced removal, the removal of so-called ‘criminal illegals’ has been the main priority of both the previous and current Secretary of State for Asylum Policy and Migration. For instance, several policy changes have been implemented in recent years to stimulate the cooperation between the Office of Foreigners’ Affairs and the National Prison Service, resulting in an increasing number of irregular migrants being deported directly from prison (Breuls, De Ridder & Bellemans, 2017). The prison has thus become a place of migration control, which can be considered an example of the ‘managing migration through crime’ thesis (Chacon, 2009).

In this article, we will show that forced removal is also presented in the political discourse as an effective measure of crime control. The immigration policy communication of the current Belgian Secretary of State for Asylum Policy and Migration, Theo Francken, will therefore be our focus of analysis. We will illustrate that most of his immigration policy communication relies on the – implicit and explicit – portrayal of forced removal as a means for crime control. Using the national newspaper database (Go Press Academic), we searched for the articles that appeared in the Flemish newspapers between October 11, 2014 (the installation of the current government) and February 28, 2017. Since we were interested in communications by Theo Francken on forced removal, we used ‘Theo Francken

Lars Breuls is a doctoral student at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium. He holds a Ph.D. fellowship of the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) and is currently preparing a doctoral thesis on immigration detention in Belgium. His research interests include practices of prison sentence implementation, the release of foreign national prisoners, and immigration detention.

[Lars.Breuls@vub.be](mailto:Lars.Breuls@vub.be)

forced removal' and 'Theo Francken illegal' (and variants) as search keywords. 689 newspaper articles were found, 572 of them were considered relevant for the analysis.

### **The political focus on crime control**

The most recurrent topic addressed in the newspaper reports is the forced removal of irregular migrants who committed terrorist or criminal acts or caused nuisance (213 articles). Most of these articles report on the increasing number of forced removals of these groups. In September 2015, Francken communicated that the thousandth irregular migrant was deported from prison that year, 'an absolute record' compared to the previous years. The figures have been increasing since, which is reported recurrently and is presented as one of the reasons for the reduction of Belgium's prison overcrowding. The results of coordinated police actions against pickpockets without residence permit in several big cities are presented as well on a regular basis. The number of arrested pickpockets decreased throughout the period 2014–2017, which is however interpreted as the proof that forced removal is an effective crime control measure. As Francken put it on April 5, 2016: 'We can conclude that the removal of petty criminals works.' The underlying assumptions are on the one hand that police actions have a general deterrent effect (other irregular migrants are deterred to engage in pickpocketing) and on the other hand that forced removal has a specific deterrent effect (recidivism is prevented through deportation).

The execution of a forced removal order is however not always straightforward due to diplomatic and judicial barriers. De Genova (2002) described the impact of 'deportability' – the constant risk of being apprehended and deported – on everyday life of migrants without a residence permit. Campesi (2015), by reversing this notion of deportability, underlines the difficulties that nation states may face in trying to deport irregular migrants and conceptualises 'undeportability' as a potential vehicle of migrants' resistance. This is also the case in the Belgian context. In the period 2008–2013, the success rate of the forced removal of Algerian migrants without residence permit from prison was 17,8% (Breuls, De Ridder & Bellemans, 2017). The lack of Algerian cooperation with return procedures is frequently referred to by Francken, for instance in July 2015 when newspapers reported that several 'illegal shop thieves' were released back on the streets. In December 2016, Francken paid a visit to Algeria together with the Prime Minister, where an informal agreement was come to: Algeria agreed to be more cooperative in future removal procedures, Belgium promised to invest more in the Algerian economy in turn. Judicial barriers to forced removals were also reported by the newspapers several times. In February 2017, a judge concluded that an Algerian person who was said to be linked to terrorism by the intelligence services could not be deported due to medical reasons. Francken reacted not amused, calling the verdict 'inexplicable' and 'pure madness'. He immediately appealed against it, emphasising in the media the dangerousness of the released person. Two weeks later, Francken communicated that his appeal had been successful and that the police arrested the Algerian person again in view of forced removal. Adducing the difficulties that may arise during removal procedures, Francken frequently demanded more detention capacity and an increase of the maximum legal duration of immigration detention. Francken expressed his intention to bring the Belgian immigration law in accordance with the European Return Directive, which allows for a maximum detention of 18 months when a third-country national shows a lack of cooperation with the return procedure. If the maximum detention length is extended, there is a clear risk that, in practice, administrative immigration detention will become an instrument of punishment for 'undeportable migrants': resistance is thus answered with detention. By framing detention and removal as essential features of 'the fight against crime and terror', this *de facto* punishment is implicitly considered desirable and justified.

Policy communication was not always initiated by Francken himself. Criticism to forced removal practices also found its way to the newspapers, especially when younger people who had been living

in Belgium for years and who were considered being integrated in society received a forced removal order (91 articles). In December 2014, being one month in office, Theo Francken clarified: 'I want to focus on the forced removal of the group of irregular migrants that cause a lot of nuisance, not on the honest, well-behaved Scott Manyo's of this world.' He referred to the case of Scott Manyo that raised public concern in the former reign. Scott Manyo arrived in Belgium in 2008 at the age of 15 and started to build up his life. After his asylum claim was rejected and a regularisation procedure was unsuccessful, he nevertheless stayed in Belgium. In April 2012, he was arrested following an identity check and put in a closed immigration detention centre in view of forced removal. Following the protests in the media, Francken's

predecessor eventually gave in and cancelled the forced removal procedure. In August 2016, Francken communicated that Scott Manyo received a permanent residence permit. The same month, however,

*Forced removal is also presented in the political discourse as an effective measure of crime control*

a forced removal order issued to Djellza, a 16-year-old girl who had been living in Belgium with her family since her first year of life, raised public consternation as well. Narratives on Djellza's everyday life voiced by relatives, friends, neighbours, etc. were consequently published in the newspapers. Although Francken emphasised that the criminal record of Djellza's brother led his administration to take the decision to deport the whole family, ultimately Djellza was granted a residence permit – but only after the rest of her family had left Belgium. However, not all mediatized protest actions were successful. In January 2016, schoolmates launched a petition against the detention and pending forced removal of Aram, an 18-year-old boy who came to Belgium in 2009. Francken decided not to react in this case.

## **Narratives and their absence**

We can conclude that the primary emphasis of recent Belgian immigration policy communication lies on the forced removal of 'maladjusted' irregular migrants who have committed criminal acts, threatened the public order or caused nuisance. Newspapers are frequently citing the statistics provided by the Secretary of State showing the ongoing increase in deported 'criminal illegals'. Insofar their 'undeportability' due to diplomatic or judicial barriers is discussed, the Secretary of State emphasises the steps he has taken and will take to 'tackle the problem' and generate a further increase in the removal figures. Removal policies are, however, not uncontested. Mediatized attacks on removal policies arise when removal orders are issued to younger people who have been living in Belgium for several years. These mediatic protests re-create at the same time the division between 'deserving' and 'non-deserving' migrants. Public resonance of counter-narratives indeed depends on the level to which the migrant's integration in society is 'proven' – a 'fact' that must be established in the 'court of public opinion' (Greer & McLaughlin, 2012). Migrants who committed a criminal act are only represented in the media by statistics. Even if they are residing in Belgium for a longer time, their narrative is not heard or spread. Moreover, their 'numerification' and 'objectivation' reinforce the idea that 'criminal illegals' have nothing relevant to say (Oberprantacher, 2016). Additionally, the frequent media reporting on nuisance caused by irregular migrants, blending statements about crime and migration, contributes to the further criminalisation of immigration.

When conducting a restrictive immigration policy, it is not illogical that prioritising practices are installed. The focus on irregular migrants who have committed criminal acts is supported across the whole political spectrum and by the larger public. It is no coincidence that, according to opinion polls, both Francken and his predecessor have been the most popular politician during the time in office. Yet, the portrayal of forced removal as an effective crime control measure is also used to justify more

restrictive immigration laws. In February 2017, newly passed legislation created the possibility to more easily revoke the residence permit of migrants who are considered a threat to the public order. Even migrants born in Belgium — a legal ground of prohibition of expulsion in the past — can now lose their residence permit and become subjected to a forced removal order when they pose a serious threat to the public order. The terroristic attacks in Paris are mentioned by Francken in the newspapers to make clear the necessity of the new legislation: ‘the ‘terrorist of Paris’ had French nationality, but could not be expelled because he was born in Belgium,’ he explained. In fact, the notion of ‘serious threat to the public order’ is broader than terrorism, depends on evolving case law and may also comprise e.g. drug dealing. Yet, references to terrorist threats evoke a sense of urgency and necessity, both regarding the law and regarding the proposed administrative measure (i.e., forced removal). Again, what becomes clear is the presupposed irrelevance of the underlying narratives of the persons who are considered as a threat to the public order — even if they have been living in Belgium since birth. Broader penological questions, such as the question if societies need to be held responsible for the (reintegrative?) punishment of offenders who have been legally residing on their territory during a certain amount of time, are indeed not posed, let alone satisfactorily answered.

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# Catch and Release

## Transgender Migrants and Opposite of Deportation in South Africa

**B Camminga**

Established in August 1996 by the South African Department of Home Affairs, the Lindela Repatriation Centre (a former Apartheid era hostel compound) is a privately operated deportation and detention facility about 30 minutes outside of Joburg, South Africa.<sup>1</sup> It is the only facility of its kind in South Africa, created in part to alleviate the strain of illegal and undocumented migrants on the South African prison system.<sup>2</sup> Designed to hold 4,500 people at a maximum the centre has been known to host as many as 7,000 detainees at a time giving rise to allegations of widespread abuse and maltreatment of migrants awaiting deportation.<sup>3</sup> In 2007 South Africa deported 300,000 people making it the world leader for that year in deportations.<sup>4</sup>

As one of the most economically prosperous on the continent democratic South Africa has a difficult relationship with migrants many of whom come to the country seeking jobs or simple protections provided for by the country's Constitution. This is particularly true for those from across the continent who find themselves persecuted on the basis of gender and/or sexual orientation. Indeed, South Africa is the only country on the African continent that explicitly protects the rights of transgender people. Migrants are overwhelmingly seen as 'illegal aliens', 'illegal immigrants' or simply 'illegals'. It is well documented that the perception of who migrants are or might be, in particular for the South African Police Service (SAPS), in South Africa is based on visible difference — darker skin tones, visible inoculation scars and at its most basic the inability to produce identity documents.<sup>5</sup> 'Illegals' are blamed for a variety of social ills, specifically crime, drug trafficking and the lack of available employment. This perceived undifferentiated flow of non-citizens into the country has led to increasing moral panic and large scale xenophobic attacks.

In 2014 when carrying out research work with transgender migrant sex workers living in Johannesburg I heard several stories regarding Lindela. None of the transgender migrants I interviewed had any paperwork of any kind through which to legally qualify their presence in South Africa. Given this and the nature of their work — sex work, which is criminalised in South Africa — several of the transgender migrants I interviewed had been arrested by the SAPS. Due to their lack of legality in the country

B Camminga is a graduate of the Institute for Humanities in Africa, University of Cape Town. Their research interests include: transgender rights, the bureaucratisation of gender in relation to asylum regimes globally and the possibilities for mobility and migration of gender-nonconforming persons from, across and within the African region.

[cammingab@gmail.com](mailto:cammingab@gmail.com)

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1 Marais, H. (1997, February 7) Twilight zone where deportees wait. *Mail and Guardian*. Retrieved July 12, 2014, from <http://mg.co.za/article/1997-02-07-twilight-zone-where-deportees-wait/>

2 Human Rights Watch. (1998) *Prohibited Persons*. New York: Human Rights Watch p. 105.

3 Klaaren, J., & Ramji, J. (2001) Inside Illegality: Migration Policing in South Africa after Apartheid. *Africa Today*, 48(3).

4 Landau, L. (Ed.). (2011) *Exorcising the Demons Within: Xenophobia, Violence and State Craft in Contemporary South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

5 Crush, J., & Williams, V. (Eds.) (2001) Making Up the Numbers: Measuring "Illegal Immigration" to South Africa. *Southern African Migration Project* (Migration Policy Brief No. 3) p. 1.

they were sent to Lindela for deportation. In all cases, though, instead of being deported – as South African law mandates – each had been released and told in no uncertain terms to return to Joburg. This paper briefly probes these expulsions and considers what release – the opposite of deportation – might tell us about the socio spatial production of borders, legality and belonging for transgender migrants in South Africa.

## Transgender Migrants

South Africa, as noted, is the only country on the African continent that not only recognises but also

constitutionally protects transgender individuals; these are rights that acknowledge their very existence. South Africa also offers the possibility of asylum on the basis of persecution due to sexual orientation or gender identity, through the South African

*Since the inception of the Refugee Act in 1998 the country has seen a steady increase in the number of transgender identified asylum seekers and migrants*

Refugees Act (1998) implemented by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). Since the inception of the Refugee Act in 1998 the country has seen a steady increase in the number of transgender identified asylum seekers and migrants seeking refuge and life in the country. Though many apply for asylum directly, given the general corruption,<sup>6</sup> poor management and difficult conditions<sup>7</sup> with regards to accessing asylum, many choose to remain outside of the system. Those who remain outside the asylum system find innovative means through which to stay in the country. Often these are means that the South African state would consider illegal.

The majority of those who do not apply for asylum and therefore lack the adequate paperwork to apply for employment turn to sex work as a means to sustain themselves. It is not simply that transgender migrants choose not to gain the required paperwork in order to access legalised forms of employment but rather that even if they were to have the required paperwork it is highly likely that would still be relegated to survival sex work in South Africa.<sup>8</sup> Sex work, as noted, is illegal in South Africa. The Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Task Force (SWEAT), an NGO that hosts a support group for trans sex workers, notes that criminalisation leaves sex workers vulnerable to violence and economic abuse by police, clients and members of the public.<sup>9</sup> Their relationship with the police is a difficult one. Sometimes they are chased as sport, at other times they are harassed and still at other times asked for sexual favours in exchange for not being arrested.

Trisha and Musa are from a country that borders South Africa. They work as sex workers in an area they have dubbed the 'Gay Corner' in Johannesburg. They are among a group of several transgender migrants that work this specific corner all of whom remain in the country through means that the South African state would consider illegal. The vast majority have no paperwork whatsoever to legitimate their presence in the country. Trisha is the eldest of the group and is often looked up to by the others as a mother figure of sorts. She has been in South Africa the longest having followed other

6 Thamm, M. (2015, July 22) Report reveals shocking levels of corruption and serial abuse at SA refugee centres.

Retrieved July 30, 2015, from <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-07-22-report-reveals-shocking-levels-of-corruption-and-serial-abuse-at-sa-refugee-centres/>

7 Difficulties for trans asylum seekers specifically include the bifurcated queuing system outside the doors to any Refugee Reception Office which immediately forces a trans asylum seeker to make a choice regarding gender prior to being able to apply for asylum. See: Camminga, B. (2017). Categories and Queues: The Structural Realities of Gender and the South African Asylum System. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 4(1), 61–77.

8 van der Merwe, M. (2015, July 21). Transgender in Focus: Past, Present, Future. Retrieved from <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-07-21-transgender-in-focus-past-present-future/>

9 Lakhani, I. (2015). Position Paper on Sex work in South Africa. Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce. Retrieved from <http://www.sweat.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Position-Paper-on-Sex-Work-in-South-Africa-2015-1.pdf>

transgender friends who came to South Africa to gain access to particular kinds of gender affirming healthcare. Musa came to South Africa to feel safe and protected by the law after being attacked in their country of origin.

## Lindela

When Musa was arrested she was wearing a dress. At first the arresting officers did not know she was trans. Once she entered Lindela though this swiftly became evident to the officials. As a trans woman she confused the officials at Lindela and at first they were unsure where to place her. She says that initially they held her in the clinic because they didn't want her mixing with the other detainees. Part of their decision to do so, as Musa explains, is because as they entered the building the other detainees began to shout at her:

They started to shout gay, 'stabani'<sup>10</sup>, you know . . . They didn't know . . . because when I dress I will be like a real woman. So one of them said — "No, no, no this one is not a lady".

The officials referred to her as gay and Musa went along with it given that she uses both transgender and gay as personal identity categories. On the same day that Musa entered Lindela she was released. More than this the officials almost begged her to leave the facility giving her money to catch a train back into Joburg.

When they discovered me I'm gay so they say "No, please go. Go we can't deport you because you are gay" . . . So I used the train to come back.

Trisha's story is perhaps the most fascinating in terms of deportation. One night while at work the police stopped at the gay corner and asked for documents. Trisha's documentation said she was in her country of origin and not in South Africa. She was, to her surprise, immediately arrested and taken to Lindela. Unlike Musa, she waited for two days to be released.

They kept me for 2 or 3 days waiting for [country of origin] . . . Home Affairs to come . . . they got no right to take us back. I mean, especially if I'm in drag . . . They feel pity that — What is my family gonna say about this? . . . You can't tell them my family understands what I am . . . You just tell them my family doesn't understand what I am.

As with Musa, they also held her in the clinic:

I wasn't feeling comfortable. There are a lot of men there. Some will be screaming bad about you, but some they are nice. . . . Three quarters they are not nice, so you don't feel comfortable. Luckily enough, you know, they kept me by myself, they didn't take me to the other rooms with the other men. I was safe, because I was staying at the clinic. There is a clinic . . . by myself, I wasn't mixed with the other people.

Trisha suggests that the officials, thinking she was gay, took pity on her. They asked her what her family would say should she be returned. She knew that if she told them that actually her family accepted her and understood who she was they would be more likely to deport her so she told them what they expected to hear — a story of persecution and rejection. The officials were so eager to release her and not have her return that they gave her asylum seeker papers, documents that she had not at any point requested. Documents that she had specifically chosen not to pursue in South Africa. After she was released, Trisha let her asylum seeker papers lapse stating that she could either bribe people in the asylum queue or bribe police not to arrest her: either way, she would have to bribe someone, and if she was arrested and sent to Lindela she was now certain she would never be deported.

## Borders and Belonging

Eithene Luibheid notes that immigration and citizenship controls function "in a double sense as the means to delimit the nation, citizenry, and citizenship, and conversely, as the loci for contesting and reworking these limits."<sup>11</sup> Critically, citizenship is not just about paperwork: it includes fundamental

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<sup>10</sup> Insulting term used in South Africa to denote gay men.

<sup>11</sup> Luibheid, E. (2005). Introduction: Queering Migration and Citizenship. In E. Luibheid & Cantu Jr, (Eds.) *Queer Migrations*:

notions of who belongs and who does not. The constant tightening of immigration policies, not just in South Africa but globally, suggests harder lines of demarcation regarding who can and cannot be a citizen – who can and cannot belong. In the vast majority of African countries homosexuality often functions as the fault line of citizenship – of national belonging. Overarching, homosexuals, in the perception of their being un-African and therefore underserving of rights and protection, do not belong. This link between rights, belonging and national space is critical. A 2010 study by the Southern African Migration Project notes that in South Africa there is a clear and unambiguous linkage between citizenship and rights.<sup>12</sup> To this end, South Africa has often been globally celebrated (while being continentally derided) for its extension of citizenship to LGBT people through the provision of constitutional rights and protections within the country.

The assumptions made by the officials at Lindela regarding the substance of Trisha and Musa's lives beyond South Africa's border are then not completely erroneous. Moreover much of the policing then of foreign bodies in South Africa, as noted, is based on visibility – what can be seen. It should perhaps then be unsurprising that what the officials in Lindela use as their evidence to establish the perceived sexuality of both Musa and Trisha is a combination of their bodies and their attire – their dresses. It is this reading of bodies and their exclusion or inclusion that is critical here. Sally Peberdy argues that the treatment of migrants in South Africa must be seen in the context of the new nation-building project of the democratic South Africa and its aims to forge a new inclusive national identity based on "citizenship and national territorial integrity".<sup>13</sup>

The behaviour of the officials suggests that when notions of gender and sexuality are taken into account and considered as part of the substance of South African citizenship and nationhood the socio-spatial borders regarding 'illegality' and 'belonging' shift considerably. Rachel Silvey notes that there is a "politics of interlinkages between place and identity, and the socio-spatial production of borders".<sup>14</sup> By allowing transgender migrants to stay, even if it is because they are perceived as gay, the behaviour of the officials suggests that being homosexual is a crucial element to their imagined understanding of place and belonging in South Africa. Trisha and Musa cannot be removed from South Africa for fear of what might happen to them, most clearly noted in the words "No, please go. Go we can't deport you because you are gay". They cannot go, so they must stay and it is this staying that seemingly reworks the limits of the imagined citizenry suggesting that the protections of the country must extend to Musa and Trisha regardless of their legal status. As Trisha notes almost nonchalantly at the end of our interview when she discusses letting her asylum papers lapse "they take me to Lindela, but I'll come back from there, because Home Affairs does not allow gay people, you know, to be deported".

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*Sexuality, Citizenship and Border Crossings*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. xi.

12 Crush, J., Pendleton, W., & Ramachandran, S. (2013) *Soft Targets: Xenophobia, Public Violence and Changing Attitudes to Migrants in South Africa After May 2008*, *Migration Policy Series* No 64 p. 12.

13 Peberdy, S. (2001) *Imagining Immigration: Inclusive Identities and Policies in Post-1994 South Africa*. *Africa Today*, 48(3).

14 Silvey, R. (2006) *Geographies of Gender and Migration: Spatializing Social Difference*. *International Migration Review* 40(1): p. 65.







# Note sul Neoliberalismo Autoritario

**Alessandro De Giorgi**

In un frammento spesso citato dei *Quaderni del carcere*, Antonio Gramsci delineava la sua famosa definizione di una “crisi di egemonia”:

Se la classe dominante ha perduto il consenso, cioè non è più “dirigente”, ma unicamente “dominante”, detentrica della pura forza coercitiva, ciò appunto significa che le grandi masse si sono staccate dalle ideologie tradizionali, non credono più a ciò in cui prima credevano, ecc. La crisi consiste appunto nel fatto che il vecchio muore e il nuovo non può nascere: in questo interregno si verificano i fenomeni morbosi più svariati. (Gramsci, 1930/1975: 311)

La teorizzazione gramsciana costituiva il tentativo di elaborare una critica politico-economica della particolare congiuntura storica alla base dell’ascesa dei fascismi europei negli anni Trenta. Tuttavia, quella lente materialistica offre uno strumento prezioso per comprendere le cicliche crisi di egemonia che hanno solcato le società capitalistiche occidentali durante il ventesimo secolo e i successivi processi di riallineamento delle strutture di potere di classe e razziali all’interno di nuovi blocchi egemonici emergenti. Nelle note che seguono vorremmo argomentare che i “fenomeni morbosi più svariati” che caratterizzano il presente momento storico — in particolare, l’ascesa dei populismi di destra e di movimenti razzisti e xenofobi in tutto il mondo occidentale — devono essere interpretati, in linea con l’analisi congiunturale elaborata da Gramsci, quali manifestazioni di una profonda crisi di egemonia del regime neoliberale di accumulazione capitalistica.

Il terreno era già stato preparato dalle periodiche crisi dei due decenni precedenti — dalla depressione argentina della fine degli anni Novanta all’esplosione della bolla speculativa delle dot-com all’inizio degli anni Duemila — ma i semi della crisi attuale sono stati gettati durante la grande recessione del 2008. Come ha sostenuto Naomi Klein, la crisi finanziaria del 2007 avrebbe dovuto costituire per il neoliberismo ciò che il crollo del muro di Berlino aveva rappresentato per il comunismo. Se il neoliberismo non è crollato come il socialismo reale, è stato perché potenti gruppi di interesse transnazionali hanno unito le loro forze nel tentativo di costruire un nuovo blocco egemonico e una nuova legittimazione ideologica per le crescenti contraddizioni strutturali globali. Come sostiene David Harvey (2007: 229), il neoliberismo è stato “un progetto politico per ristabilire le condizioni necessarie all’accumulazione di capitale e ripristinare il potere delle élite economiche”, un disegno politico formulato in risposta ai conflitti sociali degli anni Sessanta. Se fino alla metà degli anni Settanta tali conflitti erano stati mediati attraverso il compromesso welfarista/keynesiano tra capitale e lavoro, la rivoluzione neoliberale sanciva l’auto-sottrazione del capitale da quel patto sociale e l’avvio a una drastica intensificazione dei processi di “accumulazione per espropriazione”. È quindi all’interno di tale contesto che dobbiamo leggere tanto le politiche di *austerity* che hanno fatto seguito alla recessione del 2008, quanto la conseguente ondata di proteste globali — dalla primavera araba in Medio Oriente

Alessandro De Giorgi is Associate Professor at the Department of Justice Studies, San Jose State University. He received his PhD in Criminology from Keele University (United Kingdom) in 2005. Before joining the Department of Justice Studies, he was a Research Fellow in Criminology at the University of Bologna (Italy) and a Visiting Scholar at the Center for the Study of Law and Society, University of California, Berkeley. His teaching and research interests include critical theories of punishment and social control, urban ethnography, and radical political economy. He is the author of *Rethinking the Political Economy of Punishment: Perspectives on Post-Fordism and Penal Politics* (Ashgate, 2006). Currently, he is conducting ethnographic research on the socioeconomic dimensions of concentrated incarceration and prisoner reentry in West Oakland, California.

[alessandro.degiorgi@sjsu.edu](mailto:alessandro.degiorgi@sjsu.edu)

al movimento M15 in Spagna, dalle mobilitazioni di piazza Syntagma in Grecia al movimento OWS negli Stati Uniti — quali risposte alla crisi di legittimazione che ha investito il capitalismo neoliberale e le forze politiche maggiormente impegnate a sostenerlo: specificamente, nel mondo occidentale, i partiti politici liberali-centristi-socialdemocratici che sono stati alla base del blocco egemonico neoliberale a partire dai primi anni Novanta.

La crescente ondata populista, razzista e xenofoba in Europa e negli Stati Uniti, segnalata dall'ascesa di formazioni politiche quali il Front National in Francia, Alba Dorata in Grecia, il PVV in Olanda,

Jobbik in Ungheria, la Lega Nord in Italia, AfD in Germania, l'UKIP in Inghilterra e il Tea Party negli USA, costituisce l'ultimo capitolo in questo processo di ri-articolazione della politica razziale e di classe in occidente. Nonostante l'attrazione che tale etichetta può esercitare a fronte delle

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derive autarchiche, nativiste e sovraniste del discorso politico occidentale, occorre tuttavia guardarsi dalla tentazione di definire questi sviluppi semplicemente come una forma di *fascismo 2.0*. Esistono infatti diversi rischi impliciti in questo approccio, il quale: (1) costituisce una semplificazione a-storica che rischia di impedire un'analisi strutturale delle tendenze attuali; (2) tende ad appiattire ogni forma di resistenza (riformista o radicale, istituzionale o di movimento) all'interno del vasto campo di una generica opposizione liberaldemocratica alle emergenti tendenze autoritarie; (3) costringe il conflitto politico entro una modalità puramente reattiva, ostacolando di fatto il tentativo di immaginare non tanto una società liberale "meno fascista", quanto invece un modello sociale radicalmente alternativo.

Vorremmo allora suggerire che un paradigma di analisi più utile possa consistere in ciò che l'economista radicale britannico Ian Bruff ha recentemente definito come "neoliberismo autoritario". A differenza di quanto avviene nel regime di "neoliberismo liberale" rappresentato dai partiti centristi egemonici in Europa e negli Stati Uniti negli ultimi decenni:

in un regime di neoliberismo autoritario i gruppi sociali dominanti sono meno interessati a neutralizzare la resistenza e il dissenso mediante concessioni e forme di compromesso che preservino la loro egemonia, optando invece per l'esplicita esclusione e marginalizzazione dei gruppi sociali subordinati attraverso lo svuotamento — perseguito per via costituzionale e legislativa — delle istituzioni nominalmente democratiche, dei governi, e dei parlamenti. (Bruff, 2014: 116)

In questo senso, si può sostenere che mentre il neoliberismo dal volto umano perseguito da Obama ha svuotato la democrazia sostanziale dietro un sottile velo di retorica democratica — non si può dimenticare che alcuni tra gli episodi più gravi di repressione poliziesca dei movimenti degli ultimi anni si sono verificati proprio sotto l'amministrazione Obama, che i casi di brutalità della polizia sono aumentati vertiginosamente durante il suo mandato, e che le deportazioni di migranti irregolari hanno raggiunto la cifra senza precedenti di 2,5 milioni — il neoliberismo autoritario rappresentato da Trump oblitera anche la democrazia formale dietro una spessa coltre di retorica populista.

Il vocabolario mediante il quale il neoliberismo autoritario articola il proprio discorso egemonico è quello del *populismo autoritario* descritto da Stuart Hall e colleghi nell'Inghilterra thatcherista della fine degli anni Settanta: un discorso politico basato su un'astratta nozione di "popolo" che comporta la neutralizzazione preventiva di qualsiasi progetto di costruzione di alleanze di classe transnazionali e interraziali (De Giorgi 2008). Non deve allora sorprendere che durante i primi giorni del suo nefasto mandato presidenziale il neo-eletto Trump si sia affrettato a inseguire le orme dei suoi partner xenofobi europei nella crociata globale contro i migranti irregolari, i rifugiati provenienti da paesi a maggioranza islamica, e le comunità musulmane in occidente, né che si sia pubblicamente impegna-

to a deportare tutti gli “immigrati criminali”. Per quanto sia improbabile che l’amministrazione Trump riesca a deportare i circa undici milioni di migranti irregolari che si stima risiedano negli Stati Uniti, è tuttavia del tutto prevedibile un’intensificazione dei raid sui luoghi di lavoro, nonché delle detenzioni e delle deportazioni. Com’è noto, alcuni ordini esecutivi draconiani sono già stati adottati dalla presidenza Trump – sebbene successivamente sospesi per intervento di alcune corti di giustizia – e hanno avuto l’effetto immediato di gettare le comunità immigrate in una condizione di profonda incertezza e paura. Del resto, l’infrastruttura governativa necessaria per attuare una strategia di deportazioni su larga scala è già esistente negli Stati Uniti, e l’amministrazione Obama ne ha ampiamente testato l’efficacia durante gli ultimi due mandati presidenziali, che hanno visto le espulsioni di migranti irregolari toccare la cifra record di 2,5 milioni di persone.

Com’è già avvenuto in diverse congiunture critiche della storia recente del capitalismo occidentale e in particolare statunitense – dalla restaurazione del suprematismo bianco mediante l’introduzione di codici criminali razzisti negli Stati Uniti del Sud all’indomani dell’abolizione della schiavitù fino alla *revanche* razziale e di classe che ha fatto seguito alla rivoluzione dei diritti civili degli anni Sessanta – il discorso populista-autoritario rappresenta un potente schema attraverso il quale un nuovo blocco di potere emergente è in grado di articolare una narrazione egemonica volta ad impedire la costruzione di alleanze e solidarietà di classe. Questo avviene tipicamente mediante la combinazione di diverse strategie discorsive. In primo luogo, di tutto, la narrazione populista eleva artificialmente alcuni gruppi sociali retoricamente costruiti come meritevoli (per esempio, sulla base di razza, etnia, nazionalità, religione, orientamento sessuale, etc.) al di sopra di altri gruppi socialmente costruiti come immeritevoli o pericolosi, con i quali i primi condividono tuttavia un’analoga posizione di classe. Qui letteralmente la razza divide ciò che la classe unisce. Il concetto di “razzizzazione comparativa” proposto da Lisa Marie Cacho nel suo recente libro *Social Death* è in questo senso particolarmente efficace:

ascrivere un valore sociale immediatamente riconoscibile comporta la svalutazione di un altro/a, e questo altro è quasi sempre povero, razzializzato, criminalizzato, segregato, giuridicamente vulnerabile e privo di protezione . . . Negli Stati Uniti, il valore umano è reso leggibile in relazione al deviante, al non-americano, al non-normativo, al patologico, e al recalcitrante. (Cacho, 2012: 18-19)

In secondo luogo, il discorso populista-autoritario individua i presunti vantaggi (welfare troppo generoso, azioni affermative interpretate come discriminazione al contrario, eccessivi diritti per le minoranze, confini permeabili, forze dell’ordine permissive) ingiustamente goduti dai gruppi sociali meno privilegiati (come poveri razzializzati, migranti irregolari, minoranze religiose, sessuali, di genere, etc.), per mano di élite del potere – o, nella più recente vulgata, di “caste politiche” – intente a perseguire i propri interessi a danno del popolo, quali principali cause dell’insicurezza sociale sperimentata dai gruppi più meritevoli. Infine, la retorica populista equipara – in una sorta di gioco a somma zero – il miglioramento delle condizioni di vita per i gruppi sociali meritevoli alla marginalizzazione culturale, politica, e istituzionale dei gruppi sociali ritenuti immeritevoli, tipicamente mediante misure contenimento ed esclusione basate sulla criminalizzazione, il disciplinamento, la sorveglianza, la deportazione, etc. In tale contesto, periodiche esplosioni di panico morale – scatenate dalle élite politiche e amplificate dai media dominanti – preparano adeguatamente il terreno per l’emergere di politiche autoritarie di legge e ordine. Il discorso pubblico dominante rappresenta allora la criminalità di strada quale minaccia portata dai poveri razzializzati alla sicurezza personale dei cittadini rispettosi della legge; l’immigrazione clandestina quale attacco da parte di criminali stranieri alla mobilità sociale dei cittadini che lavorano; il terrorismo come assalto da parte di civiltà nemiche ai valori nazionali fondamentali; lo stato sociale come una truffa da parte dei poveri immeritevoli a danno di lavoratori onesti che pagano le tasse; i diritti sessuali e riproduttivi come un’offensiva di subculture patologiche contro l’integrità della famiglia tradizionale.



Ma quali forme di resistenza è possibile immaginare contro la morsa ideologica del populismo autoritario, specificamente in un contesto quale gli Stati Uniti di Trump? A partire soprattutto da alcune intuizioni proposte dall'attivista afroamericana Keeanga Yamahtta-Taylor in un recente libro intitolato *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (2016), vorremmo qui proporre una breve riflessione su alcuni elementi che ci sembrano componenti necessarie di qualsiasi politica radicale nell'attuale congiuntura.

(1) In primo luogo, gli attuali movimenti sociali statunitensi dovranno impegnarsi a superare l'orientamento *single issue* che caratterizza gran parte della politica extraparlamentare attuale, e con esso l'intero apparato non-profit che sostiene l'attuale paradigma dominante dell'azione politica di base. Questo significa contrastare il predominio dell'attivismo professionale, come anche l'imperante retorica *new age* che celebra traiettorie individuali di risveglio (*awakening*), riconciliazione (*healing*), cura di sé (*self-care*), etc. Al di là di ogni rivendicazione liberale di diritti individuali entro un modello di compatibilità con l'esistente, è necessario che i movimenti colgano nuovamente la sfida politica di sviluppare una complessiva visione di società post-capitalista.

(2) Contro la proliferazione di rivendicazioni giuridiche di identità "vulnerate" quali principali forme di resistenza al suprematismo bianco, è necessario costruire comunità intersezionali votate a una politica dell'insorgenza: questo significa produrre un agire politico che sia in grado di riconoscere e organizzare la natura multitudinaria dei movimenti contemporanei, consolidando al contempo formazioni politiche stabili e capaci di portare avanti una politica radicale di costruzione del comune. In questo progetto, le identità oppresse forgiate dal "capitalismo razziale" di cui ha parlato la *black radical tradition* (da WEB DuBois a Cedric Robinson) devono senz'altro conquistare preliminarmente visibilità, contro il carattere rispettivamente *color-blind*, *gender blind*, e *class-blind* del razzismo, del sessismo, e del capitalismo contemporanei. Tuttavia, l'obiettivo ultimo di questa politica dell'insorgenza non può che essere l'*abolizione* di qualsiasi nozione dell'identità quale proprietà individuale — vale a dire, la liberazione dall'identità quale principio organizzatore di qualsiasi struttura sociale gerarchica. In un loro recente lavoro, Michael Hardt e Antonio Negri (2010) articolano questa proposta nei termini della distinzione tra una politica di emancipazione — che resta inevitabilmente ancorata alla declinazione dominante delle identità — e una politica di liberazione, che richiede invece un'inedita articolazione di *singularità*. È in questo senso, ci sembra, che Frantz Fanon avanzava la provocatoria affermazione di voler "liberare l'uomo di colore da se stesso" (Fanon, 1952/1996: 8).

(3) Nel muovere oltre l'identità come proprietà, i movimenti radicali contemporanei dovranno anche superare qualsiasi nozione semplicistica e depoliticizzata del *privilegio* quale caratteristica individuale che i soggetti possano in qualche modo "disimparare" — per esempio, adottando adeguate "tecnologie del sé" — e sostituirla con un'analisi strutturale delle nuove configurazioni di potere. I modelli prevalenti di politica dell'individualità non sono soltanto compatibili con il dominante ethos neoliberale della responsabilità personale e della riuscita individuale: essi ne sono a tutti gli effetti elementi costitutivi.

(4) Infine, i movimenti attuali dovrebbero prendere le distanze dalla tendenza a creare "spazi sicuri" (*safe spaces*) facilmente cooptabili dalle istituzioni — quando non direttamente istituiti dallo stato — i quali tendono a riprodurre le concezioni prevalenti della "sicurezza" quale tutela individuale dalle (micro-)aggressioni quotidiane. Particolarmente quando promossi o sponsorizzati da istituzioni (per esempio, campus universitari) la cui principale priorità è quella di mantenere l'ordine sociale e prevenire l'emergere di mobilitazioni radicali, tali spazi rischiano di trasformarsi in ghetti tollerati per identità vulnerate, capaci di silenziare qualsiasi opposizione autonoma alle disuguaglianze strutturali. I veri spazi liberati non sono assegnati dagli uffici pari opportunità delle università, ma semmai attivamente presi da studenti ribelli.

In conclusione, l'obiettivo di una politica radicale nella congiuntura attuale non può che essere la costruzione di comunità insorgenti e intersezionali. L'unico spazio realmente sicuro è uno spazio che sia diventato insicuro per gli oppressori e libero dalle strutture di potere che essi mobilitano contro gli oppressi. Contro ogni nozione astratta e amorfa di popolo invocata dal populismo autoritario, occorre mobilitare la prassi rivoluzionaria di singolarità in lotta contro le molteplici forme del dominio e per una società post-capitalistica.

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**Io Squaderno 44**

***Deportations, Bans & Expulsions***

**edited by // Andreas Oberprantacher & Andrea Mubi Brighenti**

**Guest Artist // Stregoni | Sorcerers – a project by Johnny Mox & Above the Tree**

Picture Credits // Gabriele Spadini (18, 33), Nicola Fontana (43), Chiara Hernandez (34, 48, 54), Marco Pak Pasqualotto (8, 24), Johnny Mox (26-27, 44, 56)



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44

In the next issue:  
The Devices of Tourism

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