

Deportation, territoriality and the governing of public sentiment

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*In this paper I analyse deportation through the lens of four principle theorists: William Walters—drawing heavily on Michel Foucault’s theorisations of sovereign power, *polizei*, and governmentality—and also Nicholas De Genova and Ann Laura Stoler. First I examine Walters’s argument in the context of Foucault’s own writing on modalities of power. I then turn to the ‘deportation spectacle,’ which has been approached through the analytics of sovereignty and modern territoriality (De Genova 2009). Looking more closely at the theatrical and symbolic dimensions of deportation, I draw on Ann Laura Stoler’s work on the role of sentiment in government to analyse the deportation spectacle in terms of the governmental management of public sentiment. Through attending to the productive, moral, and affective dimensions of deportation, I suggest deportation performs an important role in the generation of public categories and in directing the distribution of public sentiment.*

Introduction

In the last two decades the United States has witnessed an historically unprecedented increase in deportations of all kinds.¹ Between 1997 and 2007, 897,099 non-citizens were deported from the United States, and according to the Department of Homeland Security, 438,421 were removed in 2013 (HRW 2009; DHS 2013). Overwhelmingly, deportees are male and are deported to Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador (HRW 2009; DHS 2013). In the wake of a ten-year strategic enforcement plan (2003-2012) in which US immigration authorities sought to ‘promote national security through ensuring the departure from the United States of all removable aliens,’ scholars have begun to examine theoretically what has been termed the ‘global regime’ of deportation (USGHS-ICE 2003, cited in De Genova and Puetz 2010:4). Its links to global economic-labour regimes, contemporary territoriality, and population cleansing, as well as its moral, productive, and even theatrical elements have drawn the attention of scholars, whose investigations of deportation have raised questions about statecraft, sovereignty, and governing under late liberalism (De Genova and Puetz 2010; Cornelisse 2010; Walters 2010; Michalowski 2013).

In this paper I analyse deportation through the lens of four principle theorists: William Walters—drawing heavily on Michel Foucault’s theorisations of sovereign power, *polizei* and governmentality—and also on Nicholas De Genova and Ann Laura Stoler. My overarching aim is to explore the utility and shortcomings of these analytics. Political theorist William Walters (2010) offers a way of analysing deportation in terms of forms of power. Drawing on Michel Foucault’s theorisations of liberal and illiberal modes of governing, Walters situates deportation genealogically in terms of a technique of power, positioning deportation within the analytics of governance and rule. For Walters, deportation is located at the intersection of

¹ The legal term for deportation is ‘removal’, which refers to the removal of non-citizens by a state power from state territory. In the United States there are two forms of removal - ‘forced removal’ and ‘voluntary’ removal.

three forms of power that operate under late liberalism: sovereign power, governmentality, and a (re)emergent illiberal form of rule—that of ‘police’ or *polizei*. In the first part of this essay, I examine Walters’s argument in the context of Foucault’s own writing on modalities of power. I then turn to what has been called the ‘deportation spectacle’ (De Genova 2009). Through the lens of Ann Laura Stoler’s work on the role of sentiment in government, I analyse the deportation spectacle in terms of statecraft and the management of public sentiment. I suggest that attention to sentiment and affect should to be an important part of any theorisation of deportation. I propose that through attention to the productive, moral, and affective dimensions of the deportation spectacle, this ‘frenetic machinery’ (De Genova 2009) of deportation may be understood as a ‘cultural engine’ (Wacquant 2009) and source of social boundaries, public norms, and moral sentiments.

Sovereign power, governmentality, and *polizei*

During his lecture series *Security, Territory, Population* at the Collège de France (1977–1978), in his readings on the configuration of power relations within Europe during the last half millennium, Michel Foucault (2009) documented and theorised historical shifts or transformations in technologies of power over the past five centuries. Since the 16th century, he argued, there has been a retreat of systems of rule based on sovereign power that operates through laws and rules that prohibit. Where these systems of rule are characterised as obviously coercive and authoritarian, by the mid-18th century, Foucault argued, there had been an emergence of a liberal and less authoritarian systems of governance. In contrast to sovereign systems of rule, Foucault (2009:107–8) posited that liberal governments adhere to a rationality, or governmentality, which identified the population as its target, the welfare and prosperity of the population as its primary concern, the political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its primary technical instrument. This liberal form of government prescribed through persuasion—rather than ruling through prohibiting—and operated chiefly through instilling a widespread desire among self-regulating, self-fashioning individuals who conformed to normal ideals through rational means of work and thrift (Foucault 2007:1–130 see lectures 1–5).

This distinction between systems of power based on sovereignty and systems of power based on governmentality are developed in *History of Sexuality* (Foucault 1978). Sovereign power, (or the juridico-institutional power as it is referred to in *Security, Territory, and Population*), may be summarised in terms of the power to kill or to allow to live—or ‘to take life or to let live’ (Foucault 1978:138). In his historical analysis, the sovereign is imagined to be the monarch, although in contemporary political science, sovereign power is generally conceived of in terms of state power.² Foucault argued that although the law represents the sovereign’s principal mode of rule, its authority is ultimately grounded in violence and force, with violence remaining as the last resort. ‘Law cannot help but be armed and its arm, *par excellence*, is death; to those who transgress it, it replies, at least as a last resort, with absolute menace’ (Foucault 1978:144). Alternative readings of sovereign power have built upon this notion of the power to decide over life and death—and the power to wield violence over declared enemies (Hansen and Stepputat 2006). Sovereign power has been theorised in terms of the suspension of order—or the abandonment of normalised rules of conduct. Building on Walter Benjamin’s notion of ‘states of exception,’ and following from Carl Schmitt’s (1985) claim: ‘Sovereign is he who decides the exception,’ sovereign power has been conceived of

² For analyses of changes in the nature of sovereign power, in particular, the tension between national and transnational sovereignty, and between state and popular sovereignty, see Étienne Balibar (2004), Aiwha Ong (1999) and Saskia Sassen (1996).

as the power to suspend usual order—whether conceived legally, ethically, or politically (Schmitt 1985; Agamben 1998; Fassin 2012). What all of these readings share, however, is the notion that sovereign power is grounded in violence and is performed to generate fear, loyalty, and to augment the power of the sovereign (Hansen and Stepputat 2006).

A third form of rule, relevant to the present analysis of deportation, can be found in Foucault's theorisation of the 'art of governing' in the early modern period, prior to liberalism. In *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, Foucault analysed a third system of rule—that of 'police' or *polizei*—in 17th and 18th century Europe (2003). In the lecture Foucault argues that in contradistinction to liberal forms of governance that came later, in early Modern Europe, 'police' was an 'art of governing' in which intervention and regulation were embraced. In contrast then to 'later' liberal forms of rule, where, 'The game of liberalism...[is] not interfering,' in this 'earlier' system of governance, the moral wellbeing of population does not emerge through normalisation and self-regulation, but rather is achieved through close supervision and intervention (Foucault 2007:48). Foucault posits that under *polizei*, order was conceived of not as spontaneous but as the effect of regulation 'That people survive, live, and even do better than just that, is what the police had to ensure' (1981:250). In this respect, police represented a totalising form of government in which order was attained through intervention.

Historicising deportation

These conceptualisations of modalities of power were taken up by political theorist William Walters (2010), whose genealogical analysis of deportation offers a way of interpreting contemporary deportation practices in terms of technologies of power and governmental rationalities. Walters (2010:85) argues that in the United States in 18th century, 'the practice of deportation was still concentrated around the pole of sovereign power'. In the 18th century, the targets of deportation were people who posed a threat to the state—agitators, subversives, and revolutionaries—in other words, people who threatened to undermine the state's sovereign authority. Although political enemies continue to be targets of deportation, by the end of 19th century, deportation had undergone a shift and expansion in its target population, whereby the category of deportable people extended to include various categories of 'socially undesirable persons', including ethnic minorities, the mad, and fugitives (Walters 2010:85). According to Walters, by the 19th century, deportation as a political practice had undergone a reconfiguration, in which it became concentrated around the pole of governmentality; that is to say, it was conceived of as a mechanism to protect the population. Initial targets in the United States were Chinese immigrants in the late 19th century—although since this time the category of undesirable people targeted for removal has greatly expanded.

While there are certainly continuities between current forms of deportation and earlier historical practices of forced removal, such as banishment, exile, and forced mass transportation, it is generally acknowledged that important legal transformations in the 1990s marked a watershed moment in the history of deportation in the United States (Walters 2010:73-83). The adoption of two laws—the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 (AEDPA), and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IRRIRA)—is often seen as a milestone in the historical process of convergence between immigration policy and criminal justice, which has not only seen a rise in the numbers of predominantly male non-citizens forcibly removed from the United States and the creation of new 'fast-track' deportation regimes, but also has been characterised by new legal categories of people—such as 'removable aliens' and 'criminal fugitives,' and expanding

categories of ‘deportability’ (Kanstroom 2012; Kanstroom 2007; De Genova 2002). Prior to 1996, ‘non-citizens’ with criminal records could request waivers based on their life circumstances, for example on the grounds of their length of residency or their relatives’ citizenship status. In 1996, deportation became mandatory for all those with criminal records, regardless of whether they had already served their sentence. Vague categories of crime—including ‘moral turpitude,’ as well as ‘liable to become a public charge’ (LCP) offenses have also sufficed as grounds for deportation (De Genova and Peutz 2010:21-23). This is applied retroactively so that criminal records assigned prior to 1996 are a basis for mandatory deportation. While the Department for Homeland Security has been criticised for failing to collect and record data about the deportee population—among those deported between 1997-2007 on the basis of criminal convictions, and for whom there are data, Human Rights Watch (2009) report that 72 per cent of those were deported for non-violent crimes. The most common form of crime serving as grounds for deportation is entering the country illegally (24 per cent), followed by driving under the influence of alcohol (7.2 per cent), assault (5.5 per cent) and immigration crimes such as selling false papers (5.5 per cent) (HRW 2009). Today, deportation is geared overwhelmingly towards the mass expulsion of men of low socioeconomic status and of Mexican and Central American origin. The deportation of Central American men and the deportation of ‘criminals’ have come to represent a discursively intertwined project, which is open to various interpretations.

Deportation may be conceived of as a technique for the management of populations through the allocation of populations to territorially-defined nation states, and has been described as the ‘logical consequence and an almost necessary correlate of a world fully divided into territorial nation states’ (Walters 2010:93). As such, Walters argues that deportation must be situated as a ‘technology of citizenship,’ and part of the wider ‘carceral archipelago’ of detention centres, camps, and waiting zones that are characteristics of modern territoriality in late liberalism. In its current form, deportation builds heavily upon various schemes of border control, documentation, and identification that proliferated in the post-World War I era (Sassan 1999; Walters 2010). One important respect in which contemporary deportation differs from earlier practices of expulsion and banishment is that it is generally reserved for non-citizens. The routinized forced removal of citizens, such as the mass transportation of convicts from England to New South Wales in the 18th and 19th century, as Walters points out, would today represent an affront to modern notions of citizenship. Nation states in the Global North do not, generally, deport citizens en masse. This transition to the modern territorial state system is therefore partly constitutive of the emergence of a new rationality that sees the allocation of populations to particular territories as not just a critical role of government, but as a sacred sovereign right of nation states, as evidenced in international law.

Liberal governmentality is also concerned with the governmental mechanism itself, reflecting a ‘governmentalization of government’ (Dean 2010). While deportation is often rationalised in terms of a need to protect the population (e.g., its economy, labour, and its welfare provision), as Walters argues, it is also rationalised in terms of demonstrating the effectiveness of the state or of the government itself, and this is reflected in the political rhetoric around deportation and border control more generally. Powerful tropes include ‘maintaining integrity’ within immigration and asylum systems themselves. Another logic then comes from a concern with the strength, efficiency, and effectiveness of the border control system. From this perspective, deportation is not just a technique for managing the population, it is also a mechanism through which governments measure and signal their own effectiveness (Walters 2010:11). As De Genova (2002) has shown, notions of impenetrable

borders, strong systems of security, effective policing, and governmental action against threats (whether against terrorism, violent gangs, or drug cartels) are routinely appealed to in official government discourse and provide sustenance and material through which states can publically, as well as internally, demonstrate their effectiveness.

Another dimension of Walters' argument speaks directly to the question of how to rectify interventionist and highly authoritarian practices within liberalism; he asserts that deportation belongs to an 'older practice of rule'—that of 'police' or *polizei* (2010:89). Walters argues that 'Deportation does not belong properly in this regime of liberal practices of rule. It belongs in older form or lineage – that of police' (2010:89). Walters deals with the problem of a highly coercive and authoritarian form of through appealing to the Foucauldian notion of an 'earlier' form of governance.

There are a number of limitations to the governmentality analytic. As many scholars, including Walters, have pointed out, deportation is not merely a technical instrument for the management of the modern territorial state system. Deportation also has a deeply symbolic role. To unpack this further, in the next section I examine what has been called the 'deportation spectacle' (De Genova 2010; De Genova 2013). I discuss recent analyses of the productive and symbolic dimensions of deportation, which have connected the theatrical elements of deportation to sovereign power and modern territoriality (De Genova and Puetz 2010; Cornelisse 2010; Walters 2010). Extending these theorisations, I argue that the theatrical dimensions of deportation enforcement can be understood as a form of governmental management of public sentiment; that these ritualised and theatrical practices—rather than being exercises and performances of sovereign power, serving to augment the power of the sovereign—may be better understood as a 'cultural engine' for the generation of public categories and for the directing of the distribution of public sentiment, which may be contextualised by a consideration of the role of sentiment and affect in government (Hume 1888, 2003; Wacquant 2010).

Spectacle and sentiment

Nicholas De Genova (2002, 2009) has drawn attention to the capacity or tendency of deportation enforcement to be paraded and to produce new and alarmist categories of people. These categories include both racialised and gendered representations (Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotell 2013). Those who are deportable under the new laws become 'illegal aliens' and 'criminal aliens,' and those who have evaded deportation become 'criminal fugitives' and targets for public raids. De Genova's account of an immigration raid on a meatpacking factory in Iowa is illustrative of this enforcement spectacle. He recounts an incident in which several hundred migrant workers were detained, leading 270 people to be prosecuted with federal criminal charges (for the use of fraudulent documents). Rather than facing deportation immediately, these individuals were first incarcerated in the United States before they were deported. The workers, who 'were marched with hands and feet in shackles' were 'paraded' into a 'make-shift courtroom ... adorned for the occasion with black curtains.' He recounts:

'The proceedings went from 8.00 am until late at night, over several days, with the undocumented workers, who had been threatened with much harsher penalties, pleading guilty in rapid succession and being summarily sentenced to 5-month prison terms. The US attorney for the district who oversaw the spectacle called the whole affair an "astonishing success"' (2009:457)

For De Genova, these spectacular elements constitute a performative exercise of sovereign power, and deportation may be seen as both a moment ‘through which the full force of the sovereign power of the state is wielded against an individual life’ (2010:23). It is also important to recognise, however, that as with other highly punitive state practices (such as drug raids), deportation is a deeply symbolic practice that is ‘actively involved in making this world’ (Walters 2010:11). This was a point made by Karl Marx, who wrote that ‘The criminal produces an impression now moral, now tragic, and renders a “service” by arousing the moral and aesthetic sentiments of the public’ (1963, cited in Wacquant 2009:29). Deportation is productive of particular narratives, images, and categories of people (De Genova 2002; De Genova 2013), and, importantly, these categories have an ethics. ‘Fugitive aliens’ and ‘criminal aliens’ are not only excluded from the rights and entitlements afforded to citizens—they are also targets of public moral condemnation. These theatrical and moral characteristics of deportation may then be interpreted in a number of ways, and have clear parallels with other punitive practices, such as drug raids, policing, and mass incarceration. As the following examples illustrate, highly authoritative and theatricalised political practices such as deportation generate and sustain gendered and racialised social boundaries, stoke moral sentiments, and as such are involved in a breadth of cultural work.

Ann Laura Stoler (2010) has shown in her work on governing in colonial states in 19th century Dutch East Indies that political rationalities of the Dutch colonial authority were grounded in the management of ‘states of sentiment.’ Stoler suggests that state intervention into public sensibilities and aspirations, and the moulding of particular ‘habits of the heart’—were crucial components of the colonial register of governance. As early as the 18th century, David Hume (1739-1740), in his *Treaties on Human Nature*, presented a theory of society in which affective management was perhaps the most significant role of government. For Hume, order and security could only be assured by the orchestration and coordination of public sentiment. More specifically, Hume (2003:339-406) argued that a key role of government was the establishment of conditions for the artificial extension of highly partial sympathy. He saw humans as disposed to care for, or sympathise with, only those in their proximate circle, and that a prerequisite for economy and society was the extension of sympathy—something that required government.

Much like the spectacle of drug raids, the ‘capturing’ of deportable migrants, or ‘criminal fugitives’, erects emotional boundaries between those with whom we ought to sympathise and those who do not merit our sympathy. The spectacle of deportation, which for Walters (2010) and Cornelisse (2010) represents a ritualised assertion of the sovereignty’s power to controls its borders, has been described as ‘a tool by which states violently reproduce the territoriality of the state system’ (Cornelisse 2010:118). For De Genova (2010:55), the theatre of deportation sustains ‘an absolutist ethics of native entitlement’. Taking this further, he argues that the spectacle of deportation both epitomises and justifies the states claim to determine a certain ‘inside’ from a certain ‘outside,’ and that through the spectacle, this sovereign claim to distinguish insiders from outsiders is made to seem ‘natural, necessary and urgent’ (De Genova 2002:436). A similar point was made by Katie Oliviero (2011:679), who, in her analysis of vigilante policing of the US-Mexico border, conceives of the border not as a physical boundary, but a site of performance for the ‘staging [of] national limits and exclusionary citizenship frameworks.’

The spectacle of deportation is therefore both gendered and racialised. Although women are detained, incarcerated, and deported in increasing numbers, and so are not immune to the punitive and violent appendages of the state projects just described, it is the theatrical and

sensationalist representations of men—Latinos in particular—that support and legitimise current removal strategies. At least 85 per cent of all people deported from the United States in recent years have overwhelmingly been men of Central American origin (Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotel 2013:284). In fiscal year 2010, just 2.2 per cent of deportees were from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Oceania (Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotel 2013: 284). This disproportionate targeting of Central American men has led Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotel (2013) to describe mass deportation in the United States as a ‘gendered racial removal program,’ the legitimacy of which, I argue, is undergirded by the state management of public sentiment.

The racialisation of deportation reflects the persistence of the ‘Latino threat narrative’ (Chavez 2013), in which ‘illegal immigration’ is made legible primarily through the spectacle of a racialised (Latino) Other (Hall 2001). In fact, the emphasis on Latinos in debates about immigration, in comparison to other undocumented groups, has led scholars to examine the ‘invisibility’ of undocumented Asian immigrants (Chan 2013) who are estimated to constitute 12 per cent of the United States’ undocumented population (DHS 2012). Alongside this racialisation of illegal immigration, as Dom’nguez-Ruvalcaba and Corona (2010) have noted, there are important differences between the ways in which the ‘illegal alien’ male and the ‘illegal alien’ female are represented and collectively imagined. While the alien male exists within a discourse of violence, drug-gangs, and criminality, the trope of the alien female is one of innocence, passivity, and victimhood (Perez 2013; Gorman 2014). This prevailing narrative of the drug-dealing, gang-involved Latino male conflates labour migration with criminal intent, ‘thus burying the economic disparities propelling migration under drug and security narratives’ (Oliviero 2011:682). This gendered construction of immigrant danger, in which the Latino male is represented as a ‘criminal alien’ and a ‘security threat’—which is perpetuated by media images of ‘gangs’ and ‘drug-smugglers’ (see, for example, Fox News 2014)—is vital to the political viability of mass deportation and is harnessed by state actors to legitimise the targeting of Central American men (Perez 2013; Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotel 2013).

Concluding remarks

The targeting of Latino males as victims of deportation demonstrates the spectrum of cultural work done by deportation and illustrates the kinds of questions we might ask about statecraft in late liberalism. Attending to these moral and affective dimensions reveals the spectacle of deportation as a mode of statecraft that is not reducible to ritualised assertions of sovereign power (De Genova and Peutz 2010). I argue that these productive and symbolic dimensions of deportation ought to be central to any theorisation of deportation. As well as territoriality and ‘imagined communities,’ at stake is also the management of public moral emotions and the creation of distinctions between a racialised and gendered deserving and un-deserving ‘other’ (Cornelisse 2010; Walters 2010; Anderson 2006).

These narratives open several avenues for further research. Chiefly, we must interrogate these social demarcations and the extent to which deportation is implicated in state projects to create racialised, heteronormative gender, and sexuality constructs. Attending to these emotional logics of the spectacle of deportation complicates what has been perhaps too-clean a conception of the deportation spectacle as an exercise of sovereign power. As I have discussed, although these observations are important, the discursive breadth of deportation as a cultural source of social demarcations is underestimated by the focus in recent scholarship on sovereignty of the contemporary nation state. This suggests that the violent and theatricalised practices of deportation should be analysed as cultural engines that produce

salient social boundaries, public norms, and moral sentiments (Wacquant 2009).

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