

Reflections on Migration and Governmentality

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Abstract This paper seeks to advance the already productive encounter between governmentality-oriented research and migration studies. It makes three arguments. First, the article calls for a more variegated and recombinant understanding of the governmentality of migration. Second, it takes issue with the rather automatic way in which questions of migration and borders have become woven together, and calls for a more eventalized and contingent understanding of bordering. Finally, it reflects on the rather presentist focus of much governmentality scholarship about migration, while joining others who call for the inscription of migration research in genealogies of postcolonial government. The paper concludes that as an inessentialist and flexible framework of power analysis governmentality is well suited to making sense of the new territories of power that migration is bringing into the world.

Foucault's research interests extended to a remarkably wide range of human experiences. Migration — at least the cross-border kind — was not one of them. While the scope of his political interventions certainly did include refugee issues (Foucault 2000), and while themes of the mobility and circulation of things and people sometimes feature in his work (Foucault 2007: 17ff.; Walters 2015), Fassin is right to point out that immigration was not an issue Foucault gave sustained attention to (Fassin 2001: 3 fn3; Fassin 2011). Much the same could be said of the theme of borders (Walters 2011).

However, it is not always helpful to ask whether or not Foucault ever wrote about this or that. More interesting for the purposes of this paper is the fact that the theoretical, epistemological and methodological 'revolutions' (Veyne 1997) Foucault introduced into the human sciences definitely have made a significant

mark on migration research. Foucault's impact on migration debates today is confirmed by a fast growing body of work that ranges from the investigation of the biopolitics of citizenship (Tyler 2010), borders (Vaughan-Williams 2010) and otherness (Fassin 2001) to the humanitarian government of refugees (Agier 2006), and from the surveillance and discipline of international mobility and labour migration (Geiger/Pecoud 2013; Salter 2013; Rudnycky 2004) to the genealogy of sanctuary (Lippert 2004; Czajka 2012).

This paper engages with one particular region within this much wider field of Foucauldian scholarship on migration. It speaks to research at the interface of migration and *governmentality*. Studies in governmentality have flourished over the last twenty years, traversing many disciplines and research fields (Burchell et al. 1991; Barry et al. 1996; Bröckling et al. 2011; Larner/Walters 2004; Rose 1999; Dean 2010; Rose et al. 2006; Walters 2012). Often regarded as a point in his intellectual trajectory at which he turned his attention towards the political technology of the state, Foucault's work on governmentality (Foucault 2007; 2008) demonstrates how themes of state formation and statecraft can be seen to intersect with questions concerning subjectivity and the government of the self; and how his earlier concern with power/knowledge and microphysics could furnish new understanding of the history of the state in terms of its constitutive arts and technologies of government (Bröckling et al. 2011: 2). While governmentality was but one set of concerns within Foucault's vast and multifaceted writings it is today perhaps "the most living" (Donzelot 2008: 116) and rapidly growing research field associated with his name.

Governmentality themes and concepts are being extended to the analysis of ever more aspects of 'new migration worlds' (Guiraudon/Joppke 2001). To mention just a few there is the role which technological practices, experts and industries are playing in the production of borders and the management of mobility (Jeandesboz 2011; Bigo 2002; 2008; Salter 2007); the use of cultural policy as a tool of minority representation and memorialization (van Baar 2011); the way in which love and marriage become instrumentalities in calculations about the validity of a migrant's status (D'Aoust 2013); the bureaucratic regime that produces illegality as an uncertain object and status (Inda 2006); recent changes in the accommodation and detention of asylum-seekers (Gill 2009; Darling 2011); and the counter-conducts and counter-cartographies by which migration regimes are contested on a molecular scale (Tazzioli 2014). In these and no doubt many other ways governmentality studies is informing and crossing into the wider field of critical migration and borders research (e.g. Nyers 2006; Huysmans 2000; Squire 2011; Hess/Kasperek 2010; Papadopoulos et al. 2008; Mezzadra/Neilson 2013; Jansen/Celikates/de Bloois 2014; Stuesse/Coleman

2014; Mountz 2010; Hyndman 2012; Anderson et al. 2009; De Genova/Peutz 2010; Balibar 2004; Anderson 2013; Andrijasevic 2007; Heller/Pezzani 2014).

In this paper I make no attempt to sum up the findings of such research.¹ Instead, I confine my attention to the identification of what seem to me a few unresolved tensions and aporia in studies at the intersection of migration and governmentality. I offer these comments in the same spirit that animates a recent collaborative project examining “new keywords: migration and borders” (Casas-Cortes et al. 2014). The editors of that project argue it is necessary to “de-sediment” the kinds of “petrified and domesticated vocabulary” that frames popular and public discourse about migration, and to expose the “unsettling dynamism” that terms like borders and migration “intrinsically ought to convey” (2). I share this ambition, just as I echo that project’s aspiration to foster closer ties between migration research and key tendencies in cultural studies, post-colonial analyses and knowledges produced by or in the service of migration movements.

My comments are organized around three themes. There are a great many topics that could be discussed under the heading of migration and governmentality. I will be very selective in what I highlight. I cannot claim a single overarching logic connecting my three themes. Instead, it is a matter of taking the heading as an opportunity to surface a set of overlapping points that have for some time engaged me. First, I make the case for a more variegated and recombinant understanding of the governmentality of migration. Second, I take issue with the rather automatic way in which questions of migration and borders have become woven together, and call for a more eventalized and contingent understanding of bordering. Finally, I reflect briefly on the rather presentist focus of much governmentality scholarship about migration, while joining others who call for the inscription of migration research in genealogies of postcolonial government. Of course, other tensions and gaps in the literature could be highlighted as well. Nevertheless, if this admittedly partial engagement with just a few conceptual problems stimulates further debate it will have done its job.

¹ Fassin (2011) offers an impressive survey of some of the main arguments, problems and themes that can be brought together under the heading he calls ‘the governmentality of immigration’. As such he highlights a politics of borders and boundaries, a focus on temporality and spatiality, a concern for states and bureaucracies, and engagement with problems of detention, deportation, asylum and humanitarianism.

Encountering Governmentality

The word encounter carries the connotation of an unexpected meeting, but also a struggle. If we take the view that governmentality is a ready-made framework that merely needs to be applied to migration research, we leave little room for the encounter. For governmentality to encounter migration there needs to be change on both sides: what we understand by governmentality should itself be modified and enhanced by the meeting with migration problems. One index of that enhancement would be the addition of new terms and analytics to its conceptual lexicon.

When governmentality is treated as a kind of template that is there to be applied to migration questions, we certainly see migration worlds in a different light. We gain a better appreciation, for example, of the dispersed character of migration control and the technologies that mediate its government at a distance. But there is also a certain risk. It is that a so-called Foucauldian or governmentality *lens* becomes instead a *filter*. An instrument intended to enhance the intelligibility of certain patterns turns into a device that filters out unexpected colours and hues from the world. At worst it can make for a rather monochromatic view of power relations and somewhat predictable kinds of analysis.

As an antidote to this tendency I want to extend the point that has been made in different forms by a number of thinkers (Merlingen 2008; Rosenow 2009; Rose et al. 2006; Neal 2009; May 2005). More than any particular concept or theory, what is most valuable in Foucault is the critical and experimental ethos of inquiry that he consistently practiced. Neal puts it well when he stresses that “We should not allow Foucauldian concepts to become disciplinary when Foucault did not think twice about abandoning them”. Rather than fix on a particular concept like sovereignty, the state, or governmentality, we need to think in ways that are always open to what is emerging and what is under transformation. Governmentality itself risks becoming a fix, a thing. As Neal puts it, this is “not a prohibition on using the term, but a warning against allowing it to become an *object*” (Neal 2009: 541f., his italics).

There have been a number of key interventions within and outside governmentality studies that point to theoretical strategies with which to foster a more supple, mobile and variegated analysis of power relations. For example, Collier (2009) calls for us to think in terms of topologies and recombinations, Rabinow foregrounds the experimental and effervescent milieu that he associates with the much used term assemblage (Rabinow 2003: 56), while Veyne directs our

attention to the incredibly diverse objectifications of the governed that have existed in history (Veyne 1997). For the purposes of this short paper, and with the objective of engaging more specifically with the governmentality of migration I suggest three concrete moves that may prove useful. My inclination here is more practical than philosophical — a move that reflects an argument I have developed elsewhere (Walters 2012: 111f.), namely that the volume of texts that offers theoretical reflection on genealogy vastly outweigh those that unpack it as a research practice. If this is indeed the case then what I offer are a few lines that, in spirit at least, seek to redress this imbalance.

First, research on migration should give more weight to what we could call mid-range concepts. An example of a mid-range concept is what I have elsewhere called ‘antipolicy’ (Walters 2008). Quite often one sees analysis of a given practice or phenomenon oscillate between very high-level concepts like neoliberalism and discipline — taken straight from Foucault’s ‘toolbox’ — and concrete specificities. For example, it would be quite feasible to make sense of anti-trafficking campaigns as instruments of migration governance using concepts like liberal or neoliberal governmentality and risk governance. These would, no doubt, capture key features at stake here such as the will to differentiate and order mobilities in terms of “good” and “bad” circulation (Foucault 2007: 18). But here, I suggest, we gain additional analytical purchase from the introduction of a mid-range concept like antipolicy. What is antipolicy? Anticorruption, antiterrorism, antipoverty, antitrafficking, antiracism, etc.: it seems that today public and private intervention across a broad swath of problem domains is organized and legitimated as a campaign to combat and sometimes eliminate bad things. Despite their different domains, despite the fact these campaigns sometimes originate from civil society organizations while at other times from within the state, these initiatives display certain features in common. For instance, they all stake their legitimacy on the mobilization of a kind of polarization effect within the public sphere: are you with or against the good? Our understanding of antitrafficking as an intervention within the area of migration governance is surely enhanced once we can grasp the fact it bears strong family resemblances to this transversal field of action.

Second, it is important to move analysis beyond a concern with singular logics and look for unexpected, paradoxical, heterogeneous and perhaps unstable combinations of rationalities and techniques; to ask how these combinations might materialize within a given institution or site. This orientation towards the composite, improvised and impure character of governance is well represented in research that is informed by an ethnographic sensibility (Mezzadra/Neilson 2013: 7), if not always an ethnographic method. Such an outlook is able to

capture the way in which technologies of control are cobbled together somewhat adventitiously: one can say they are emergent and never perfectly follow a plan (Hall 2012; Hess 2012; Ong 2005). For example, Makaremi has written a disturbing genealogy of waiting zones in French airports, tracing their incorporation into the border regime as an instrument to limit asylum claims and contain politically unwanted mobilities. To describe the way in which a rather expedient and ad hoc practice acquires a degree of institutionalization and legitimation in the public sphere she speaks of *humanitarian confinement* (Makaremi 2009: 430f.). This paradoxical term effectively captures the ambivalence of a policy that engages its target population as simultaneously vulnerable *and* criminalized. The notion of humanitarian confinement illustrates more broadly the merits of fashioning concepts that operate in what Rabinow calls “proximity to concrete situations” (Rabinow 2003: 3).

Third, and finally, it is a worthwhile exercise to look for movements of co-option, reinscription, capture and fracture. It is worthwhile because such a move challenges the simplistic view that power emanates from the state and capital, whereas resistance only comes from beyond — from the realm called civil society or social movements. The picture is of course much more complicated: if power is not a property of institutions so much as a circulation of practices, techniques and subjectivities that can be captured and put to use in particular programmes but never ultimately owned, if this is the case then we need to be attentive to the ways in which practices of governing are often brought into being in the context of campaigns of contestation and dissent. In speaking of the counter-conducts within Christianity during the Middle Ages Foucault describes these dissenting movements as “border-elements”; they do not exist outside Christianity but are “continually re-utilized, re-implanted, and taken up again in one or another direction, and these elements, such as mysticism, eschatology, [or] the search for community, for example, have been continually taken up by the Church itself” (2007: 214f.).

When humanitarian NGOs take up functions in the management of detention centres — precisely the kind of scenario Makaremi describes (above) — then we have a kind of border element. Agencies that are in many respects quite critical of the state and its treatment of refugees become ambivalent functionaries in its extended networks. Of course, such co-options are likely never smooth. And the NGO workers are not naive about what they are getting into. No doubt they produce tension and perhaps even fracture within the non-state organizations. Nevertheless, it is out of such movements that a border regime is assembled and operates through networks that reach far beyond the formal boundaries of the state.

Likewise consider how the act of offering sanctuary to people without status can take on the quality of the border element. As Czajka (2012) has observed, sanctuary occupies an ambiguous zone since it can be interpreted both as a challenge to the monopoly which the state claims over the right to offer refuge but also a practice that, inasmuch as it may select only the most 'suitable' and 'appropriate' candidates, echoes the very screening process deployed by the state in its encounter with refugee flows. The bigger point here is that to grapple with border elements is one way to move beyond static and monolithic conceptions of a border regime, and register the many little lines of force that run in multiple directions, constituting the border regime as a complex and dynamic multiplicity.

Attending to mid-range concepts, a focus on the assembled, impure quality of governance, and a concern with border-elements — three out of many ways, then, to cultivate a more supple and variegated understanding of the governmentality of migration. And three ways to configure the governmentality/migration interface as an encounter.

Eventalizing The Border

Let us turn to the question of borders more fully. Quite often we speak of borders and migration in the same breath. The two subjects appear inseparable, like two sides of the same coin. The extent of scholarly and public attention that has been brought to the theme of borders in the past 20 years is quite remarkable. It is remarkable, necessary and important. But it has come at a cost. I think we are verging on an academic condition of *borders-centrism*. I know that may sound quite complacent and said with the privilege of someone — a white male university professor holding two passports — who enjoys a form of hypermobility. My point is not to trivialize the fact that certain geographical borderzones have become scenes of mass suffering and death. Nor is it to downplay the many ways in which the apparatus and the dynamics of bordering are changing. And it is not to underestimate the extent to which the border functions today as a privileged signifier, a meta-concept that condenses all manner of cultural fears about contamination (cultural *and* biological), illegality, and terrorism, while fantasizing over a spatial fix for these mobile bads.

What I do want to interrogate is the way that border talk has become quite pervasive across the social sciences and humanities. Where once we might have used metaphors of strata, pyramids and other gradients of ascent and descent

to visualize relations of struggle and domination today we are much more likely to imagine poverty in terms of inclusion and exclusion, to theorize citizenship in terms of its borders, or problematize community and belonging with regard to their boundaries. We have moved from pyramids and other vertical forms to scapes, flows, networks, fields, zones and so on. The whole axis of our thinking about power has moved through 90 degrees — from the vertical to the horizontal. Our ontologies of power have become flattened. What I am calling border talk is very much a part of this development. The implications of this are far from clear but do bear thinking about.

Does it matter that border talk has become so pervasive? Could this move to theorize diverse situations of power under the sign of borders not in fact reflect a positive development, namely the recognition that *state* borders do not exhaust the field of bordering, but are instead a particular instantiation of something wider? As Rumford (2008) has shown in his illuminative exploration of the various non-state agents who engage in ‘borderwork’, a compelling argument could be made along such lines. In a similar vein, Mezzadra and Neilson deepen the conceptual power of borders even further when they connect it to new concerns like the multiplication of labour, the temporality as much as the spatiality of movement, and the mechanisms of differential inclusion (Mezzadra/Neilson 2013: 7f.). Rejecting the commonplace idea that borders only separate and divide, and highlighting that borders also connect, include, and exert violence in those modalities as well, Mezzadra and Neilson have shown how borders can be a privileged vantage point for grasping transformations in citizenship, state and capital today.

My point in registering a point of caution about a borders focus is not to query the powerful insights and political understanding that is being generated by placing borders at the centre of studies of migration and capitalist world order. It is only to highlight the potential risks that stem from this privileging of borders — as a site and metaphor of power. I will make two points here.

First, a point about the historicity of the borders/migration nexus. Borders have become so ingrained in the way we discuss power, so much a second nature in our political imagination that we begin to lose sight of the border as an event. The point is this. The borders/migration nexus is far from being a universal. Not all societies at all times experience controversies of migration in a way that accords the border a prominent and central role, whether as a problem space, a symbol of sovereign power and its transgression, or as a solution. For example, when ‘immigration’ returned to the centre of party politics and public concern in the UK in the 1970s it did so in ways that certainly were peculiarly

and profoundly spatialized and racialized. The figure of the ‘mugger’ and the troubled space of the ‘inner city’ loomed large in the mass mediation of public anxiety (CCCS 1981). But while concerted efforts were made to redesign nationality laws, and to mobilize development aid in the bid to limit flows of migration from Britain’s postcolonies (Tyler 2010; Duffield 2006), while this re-engineering of the imagined and legal geography of British citizenship went on, such tactics were rarely discussed or visualized in terms of borders.

Ultimately we need a better appreciation for the contingency of bordering. “Certain historical periods are more favorable than are others for the development of barriers between territories and people”, Fassin has argued. “The sensitivity of the question of immigration, the hostility toward aliens, the consolidation of borders, and the delimitation of boundaries appear to be cyclic phenomena”, he goes on (Fassin 2011: 215). The point is important because it moves us away from a linear or teleological understanding of bordering to one that looks for the combinations of factors that might account for the coming *and* the going of borders. Crossing borders today has become a life and death experience for many people. Nevertheless, what’s needed at the level of scholarship is an inessential and circumstantial view of borders, one that can ask: what do we gain but also what do we lose when we conceptualize power in terms of borders?

The second problem with borders-centrism is that the gravitational pull of this dense problem-object is such that it draws our attention from other spatialities in migration politics that merit further analysis. For example, what of the various ways in which migration is now being visualized, problematized, policed and contested at the level of its geographical and infrastructural *routes*? Whether it is the question of the route as a truth about the migrant that is sought and used to determine which state should hear a particular refugee claim (e.g., under the provisions of the EU’s Dublin regulations), the route as a line of clandestine movement that political authorities insist must be mapped and made visible to security agencies and publics (Hess 2010), or the route as an informal know-how — a ‘mobile commons’ (Trimikliniotis et al. 2014; see also Tazzioli 2014) — shared amongst migrant networks it seems that the route is an emergent force field in migration struggles. Clearly its emergence within various orders of knowledge and policy has much to do with the policing and navigation of borders, and the diverse political, bureaucratic, financial and geographical obstacles migrants often face in exercising movement. Yet I want to suggest there is sufficient density to these different productions of the route that it merits theoretical and empirical analysis in its own right. Rather than relegate the route to being a second order effect of bordering strategies, we need

to theorize the politics of routes *as such*. As Paul Gilroy put it, in speaking of the cultural politics of the Black Atlantic, political possibilities are opened up when we shift our frame from roots to routes (Gilroy 1993: 133).

It is well known that for Foucault biopolitics refers to the always historical ways in which population has been constituted as an instrument and an end of power relations. Now, the road can certainly not be considered a problematization on the same order of significance as vital life. Nevertheless, I do think the road and the route has a sufficiently enduring status in western culture — both as a set of mythic elements (Lehari 2000) and a space of power/knowledge and contestation — that we can speak, somewhat analogously, of *viapolitics* (Walters 2014; 2015). Recalling the etymology of *via* — where *via* is the Latin word for road or way — a focus of *viapolitics* would, amongst other things, address the different ways in which routes and their vehicles become stakes in power relations and political actions. Borders are proliferating but so are routes. This is not to suggest that a concern with *viapolitics* should supplant a focus on borders. But it could serve as a provocation against borders centrism, and a complement to critical borders research.

Migration, Power, Postcoloniality

Finally I want to make two points about migration, government, and postcoloniality. That relations of colonial power and domination are something of a blindspot in Foucault's work has been a matter of widespread commentary (Young 1995; Legg 2007). As Derek Gregory has noted, Foucault “showed with unsurpassed clarity how European modernity constructed the self [...] through the proliferation of spacings. But these were all spacings *within* Europe [...] [T]he production of spacings that set Europe off against its exterior ‘others,’ the very distinction between interior and exterior that initiated his journey into the order of things, was lost from view” (Gregory 2004: 2f., his italics). Elsewhere Foucault did acknowledge the “boomerang effect” by which the West imported techniques of power that it had first developed in its colonies, practicing “something resembling colonization [...] on itself” (Foucault 2003: 103; quoted in Gregory 2004: 263 fn4). Yet overall it seems reasonable to say that the work of figuring out how coloniality and governmentality implicate one another has been left to others to take up (Scott 1995; Stoler 1995; Mitchell 2002; Rojas 2002; Hindess 2001; Duffield 2007; Chatterjee 2004).

While critical research on migration policy and politics has for some years carried on a fruitful if intermittent dialogue with postcolonial theory (Raghuram

2009; Rigo 2005; El Qadim 2014), themes of coloniality and postcoloniality have been rather marginal within a great deal of the work that has sought to understand the *governmentality* of migration. Whether or not this reflects Foucault's legacy and the particular set of priorities he brought to his work, or the wider amnesia that inflects migration studies when it comes to the colonial is not the main issue here. What is more important is that we unsettle not just the 'methodological nationalism' (De Genova 2013) and 'methodological Europeanism' (Garelli/Tazzioli 2013: 247) which structure academic knowledge about migration, but do so in ways that examine possible connections between the rationalities, technologies and programmes of migration governance and the histories of colonialism. And here I should stress that I understand colonial and postcolonial not as successive stages but, following Akhil Gupta, "heterogeneous temporalities that mingle and jostle with one another to interrupt the teleological narratives that have served both to constitute and to stabilize the identity of 'the West'" (Gupta 1998: 17: quoted in Gregory 2004: 7).

A short essay like this is hardly the place to explore such mingling and jostling at any length. Instead, I shall simply sketch two areas where research into the governmentality of migration could be advanced by a stronger dialogue with postcolonial studies.

First, there needs to be a more concerted effort at provincializing Europe when it comes to the analysis of the international politics of migration. While theories concerning the autonomy of migration have been highly effective in their insistence that migration worlds are being made from below by migrant movements, and not just by the powerful governments of the global North (Papadopoulos et al. 2008; Rodriguez 1996), this work of decentring the field of political and social agency has yet to be properly extended to the level of North/South interstate relations, or the asymmetrical expert networks that connect these regions. There is no shortage of research that analyzes the 'externalization' of the EU's border regime, and the internationalization of migration management — the subtle and less subtle ways in which the governments of the global South get conscripted within its geopolitics of 'neighbourhood', or find themselves reclassified as 'countries of transit' with particular political consequences (e.g. Lavenex/Uçarar 2003). Yet we know rather less about how these strategies of control appear from the points of view of the police authorities, border guards, migration bureaucrats, local charities and other agents who belong to the states and societies of the places territorialized as countries of transit and origin.

There are, of course, a growing number of exceptions to this rule. We should note here the pioneering work of ethnographic border regime analysis con-

ducted by many Germany-based researchers (Hess/Kasperek 2010; Hess 2012) as well as studies in the politics of migration management (Geiger/Pécoud 2010; Geiger/Pécoud 2013). We should mention also Frowd's recent work on the relationship of gendarmes in Mauritania towards IOM funded border training exercises (Frowd 2014). And we should flag the recent call for critical border analysis to pay more attention to dynamics of race, gender and class in bordering practices (Basham/Vaughan-Williams 2013). But in the space that remains I will confine my attention to the recent work of Ruben Andersson (2014a; b). His ethnographic eye captures the complex weaving of formal and informal economic flows and bureaucratic practices that configure mobility and control with regard to what he calls an illegality industry, a constellation that connects European and African states, international agencies, migrants, smugglers, security companies and others in unpredictable shapes and contradictory dynamics. The following passage, whose context is the coastal patrols that Senegalese police are supposed to conduct in collaboration with Spain and Frontex, is worth quoting at length.

“The patrols were [...] an exercise in what police chiefs called ‘visibility’ — to show ‘candidates’ that the police were ready to cut short any attempted boat journey to Europe [...] [They] were also about visibility in another sense — as a show for the funders and the visiting researcher. In Dakar’s seaside neighbourhoods, former clandestine migrants deported from Spain said they never saw the patrols, despite police reassurances of their existence. Moreover, they insisted that ‘Frontex’, which to them meant a hapless bunch of bribe-taking Senegalese state agents, could not stop them from departing” (2014b: 128).

Andersson goes on to explain that by 2010, however, the flow of would-be migrants attempting to depart Dakar’s shores had ceased. The reason had to do with the way money was now moving within the illegality economy. “Money circulated downwards, through payments to informers. A delicate balancing act was thus maintained between the European paymasters, African forces, local youth, and potential ‘smugglers’, but how long it would last was another matter” (2014b: 128).

The great merit of this kind of ethnographic focus on the way border control is embodied, experienced and negotiated is that it does not rely upon arguments as to whether or not local authorities have been ‘socialized’ into European norms to account for the extension of the border regime. It does not operate an explanatory model in which the dynamics of governmentality only move

outwards from a European centre. Nor does it assume that technologies of government are straightforwardly implemented and put into action in the field. Instead, it traces the complex connections, relays, translations, alliances and betrayals which go into making an assemblage of governance. What a border is, and what a border does, is being made on site, as it were.

Second, I wish to make a more historical point about coloniality and governmentality. In contrast to Foucault who worked as a historian and rarely engaged the present or recent past directly as an empirical domain, studies of governmentality have been overwhelmingly focused on the contemporary as their research field. This confinement of the problem space to the present and very recent past has perhaps been a factor in stunting reflection on the relationship of migration and coloniality. This is indeed unfortunate. There is a good case to be made for situating the analysis of contemporary practices, instruments and strategies of migration control in a genealogical trajectory that explores their relationship to colonialism. But in order to make this case we must first ask a very fundamental and basic question. What is migration policy? What is its appropriate field of reference?

The commonplace view of migration policy, shared by many scholars, publics and governments, is that it is a set of laws, regulations, bureaucracies and procedures that together regulates the cross-border movement (but in some versions also the 'internal' migrations) of people, setting the terms under which they enter, reside, work, settle and perhaps integrate in other countries. While migration theories and ideologies might disagree on much, what most of them share is the view that migration policy is a necessary instrument of sovereign states, and perhaps increasingly salient in a globalizing world of flows.

However, a second view of migration policy is possible. This alternative position challenges the 'metaphysics of borders' (De Genova 2013: 255), and by extension the metaphysics of the state that undergirds the mainstream view. As such it queries the fundamental premise that an inter-national world — a world governed in the image of a system of states — is a natural foundation or referent for migration policy (Anderson et al. 2009). Instead, this view sees migration policy as a key operator in what Hindess has called the international management of population (Hindess 2000). Seen from this angle migration policy could be likened to a form of dispersed police that is exercised over the world's population, ordering, dividing, distributing but also connecting populations and territories (Walters 2002). And here, following Foucault (2007) and Neocleous (2013), I invoke the archaic, pre-liberal meaning of police — that set of historical knowledges and practices dedicated to ordering society for

the purposes of enhancing the forces of the state.

To speak of the different migration policies of the states of the world as comprising a system of dispersed police is not to suggest that some kind of world police state exists.² Nor is it to overlook the fact that this system of dispersed police is confronted by, and interacts with forces of liberal governmentality. Indeed, we should note that in most western states the conduct of migration policy is periodically criticized and adjusted from the point of view of its relationship to markets, the organized interests of citizens and groups, and, in the era since WWII, the human rights of migrants. In other words, whatever fantasies of totalizing security or perfectly controlled borders may animate electoral politics, migration policy must ultimately answer to demands for economy in government. Logics of security and freedom confront one another (Bigo 2011). Yet migration policy is nevertheless comprehensible as a form of police inasmuch as it concerns the ordering of populations, territories, and their bureaucracies. On this second view, then, migration policy is not a second order effect of a world divided into states; it is an apparatus that is in part constitutive of that *inter-nationalized* world.

One important question then follows from this second view: what is the genesis of the mechanisms that make up migration policy? Where did political sovereignty find these tools? Here I would insist that a satisfactory answer cannot ignore colonialism and its aftermath. As many historically-minded scholars have shown the colonial encounter served as a hothouse for all manner

² To get a sense of how this system of dispersed police operates, consider the case of passports. We might think of the passport as an expression of the sovereignty of the state — from the national symbolism that adorns its pages to its express function of regulating the movement of citizens and foreigners across the borders of the state. At the same time, however, passports are themselves governed by a fairly dense system of international standards and practices. Various forms of pressure (diplomatic, geopolitical, economic etc) as well as incentives (e.g., technical support) exist, and they are relayed by the wealthy states and international organizations (e.g., the International Civil Aviation Organization) for the poorer states of the world in particular to adopt more advanced and sophisticated forms of passport technology (eg, biometric face recognition features). If the passport makes the world's population visible and legible to border authorities and many other settings, this is not the work of a world police state. Instead, it is the effect of the system of standards, and the institutions that back them up, which operate a dispersed police in the realm of identification practices. On passport standards see Walters/Vanderlip (2015); Salter (2003) and Stanton (2008). What I am calling dispersed police should be read alongside Foucault's remarks about "inter-state police" in the nineteenth century. "In the end there will be imbalance if within the European equilibrium there is a state, not my state, with bad police. Consequently one must see to it that there is good police, even in other states" (Foucault 2007: 315). Here, I think, we find anticipated the gist of what today international experts call 'failed state' and its concomitant policy of 'statebuilding'.

of inventions pertinent to the policing of population, including the development of administrative sciences (Osborne 1994), state-orchestrated identification practices (Breckenridge 2014; McKeown 2008), the making of frontiers (Walters 2004), the sequestration and detention of pariah populations (Netz 2004), and the use of air power to advance police power (Neocleous 2013). It did all this on multiple scales, ranging from the hierarchical division of towns and institutions into racially coded zones (Fanon 1963: 37ff.) to the long-distance transportation and redistribution of people with varying degrees of freedom and unfreedom (Walters 2002).

A growing body of work offers a new perspective on the nature of modern migration policy by reading it against the grain of precisely these kinds of colonial practices and sensibilities. Such work shows how, like development policy (Mitchell 2002), migration policy takes shape in the space opened up by the breakdown of colonial systems and the formal shift away from the kind of state racism Foucault identified (Foucault 2003), while also carrying over and reorganizing key practices invented by colonial power (Duffield 2006; Ngai 2004; Turner 2014). This is, in my view, an enormously important line of research. For it challenges the amnesia of the discipline of migration studies that has largely, and sometimes all too conveniently forgotten the population movements of empire, placing them in a remote past. It also challenges the way that scholarship tends to think about the relationship between liberal and illiberal practices. The view that illiberal practices are an exception to a liberal norm rather than a measure woven into the way liberal democracy and liberal empire has functioned throughout modernity becomes less tenable the more that we understand the normalcy of illiberal practices within colonial rule (Neocleous 2006; Hindess 2001). One hopes that future research will strengthen our understanding of the colonial and postcolonial overdeterminations of migration policy.

Conclusion

This article has argued that governmentality studies offers a critical perspective on the human experience of migration. Furthermore, it has argued that the relationship between governmentality and migration is better modelled as one of encounter rather than application, since the idea of an encounter presumes that what we understand by migration, *but also* governmentality will change when these two phenomena are brought together.

Let me conclude by drawing out a point that has been implicit throughout

this article. It is that governmentality affords a valuable perspective precisely because its understanding of power is not wedded to a static concept like the state, nor to any telos of transformation like global governance. With its characteristic analytical focus on rationalities, technologies, subjectivities, and bolstered and extended with other midrange concepts, it is well suited to map the new territories of power that are being brought into being by the encounter between politics and migration. For migration, no less than global finance or climate change, is a truly world-making phenomenon. Only with a creative attitude to theory and research and an ‘historical ontology’ (Hacking 2002) can we hope to make sense of such world-making.

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