

Expulsion, Membership and Political Community Historical and Multi-Disciplinary Perspectives COMPAS and RSC

Background

Over the last decade there has been a prodigious rise in the use of deportation--the enforced and authorised removal of non-citizens from state territory--by Western countries as a way of dealing with failed asylum-seekers, unlawful migrants, criminals, and suspected terrorists. Scholars of human rights and migration and refugee studies have analysed this development primarily through the lens of immigration control. Deportation has been viewed as one amongst a range of measures designed to restrict entrance, distinguished primarily by the fact that it is exercised inside the territory of the state. While acknowledging its important role as an immigration control tool with implications for the human rights of those deported, in this project we intend to examine deportation's broader social and political effects.

Research Aims and Questions

Our research aim is to explore the ways in which the rise of deportation reflects and generates changes in conceptions of membership in liberal states. Much work on membership examines the rules and processes by which foreigners gain citizenship in liberal democratic societies. We believe, however, that by examining the processes through which rights of residence are *lost*, new light can be shed on how membership is in a process of transition. The results of our work are likely to have important implications for understanding for the terms on which immigrants are expected to integrate into Western societies.

The initial basis of our research is organised around the following questions:

The ESRC Centre on

Migration, Policy and

Society (COMPAS) at

the University of Oxford

conducts high quality

research in order to

develop theory and

knowledge, inform

public

opinion and contribute

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- How has the growing use of deportation affected attitudes to the acquisition of citizenship and social integration amongst immigrant populations?
- Does the threat the recent "deportation turn" poses to the secure residence of foreigners impact differently on particular racial and ethnic groups living in Western societies?
- What understandings of citizenship (or membership) are implicit or explicit in recent government justifications of the law and policy of deportation?
- How do prevalent conceptions of membership (official, legal, and popular) constrain the state's ability to use deportation as a membership-defining tool?
- To what extent does the varied vulnerability to deportation of different types of residents (for example, unlawful migrants, permanent residents, "probationary citizens", EU citizens) create new and invidious hierarchies of membership?

Methods and current work in progress

As a first step in achieving this aim we have obtained one year's funding from Oxford University's John Fell Fund with a view to developing an interdisciplinary research project on deportation and citizenship. In 2009 we plan three main activities: exchange of expertise; small-scale research; grant writing.

1. Exchange of expertise

The exchange of expertise is planned to take place primarily through two workshops. The first, scheduled for Summer 2009, is an internal Oxford workshop, identifying Oxford scholars working on projects and papers of relevance to the topic of deportation and citizenship. We are particularly interested in scholars working on citizenship across the disciplines of Criminology, Law, Classics, Literature, International Relations, History, Politics, and Philosophy. These are not usually in the orbit of migration and refugee studies. We will set up an interdisciplinary network on deportation and citizenship, identify key research questions which reflect Oxford's distinctive contribution to these issues, and discuss different theoretical and methodological approaches. The second workshop, planned to take place in Autumn 2009, will bring together scholars from the Oxford network and scholars of deportation from other universities, as well as informed sources from government and NGOs, to exchange latest developments on the topic and sharpen the project's innovative interdisciplinary aspects and comparative dimension.

2. A small-scale research project

A small scale research project will provide a literature review of work on deportation and identify gaps in the field. Consistent with our theme of viewing deportation as a mechanism of social control, the project will pay particular attention to the legal, political, and sociological effects of deportation and examine its role as a symbolic form of state activity. It will also focus on the way that gender, race and ethnicity impact upon the use of deportation.

The project will also undertake other work central to the larger project proposal we will ultimately submit for external funding. In particular, the researcher will examine existing policies and laws on deportation across a number of countries, providing some of the data necessary for case selection and international comparison. In addition, the researcher will identify, form links, and interview key actors in the field of deportation in the UK (e.g., officials from the UK Border Agency, the National Anti-Deportation Campaign, and the International Organization for Migration).

3. Grant application

The exchange of expertise (i.e. workshops) and the small-scale research are both geared towards developing and writing up of a large-scale research project on deportation and citizenship to be submitted for external funding. Both COMPAS and RSC have an excellent record in carrying out and obtaining funding for interdisciplinary collaborative project from the UK and EU funding bodies.

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