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Detention-as-Spectacle

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Abstract
Using a combination of migration studies, political sociology, and policy studies, this paper explores the contradictions and violence of immigration detention, its architectures, and its audiences. The concept of 'detention-as-spectacle' is developed to make sense of detention's hypervisible and obscured manifestations in the European Union. We focus particularly on two case studies, the United Kingdom and Malta, which occupy different geopolitical positions within the EU. Detention-as-spectacle demonstrates that detention is less related to deterrence and security than to displaying sovereign enforcement, control, and power. A central aspect of the sovereign spectacle is detention's purported ability to order and even halt 'crises' of irregular immigration, while simultaneously creating and reinforcing these crises. The paper concludes by examining recent disruptions to the spectacle, and their implications.

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Detention-as-Spectacle

Introduction

Strident policy measures aimed at the deterrence, detection, control, and expulsion of irregular migrants and asylum seekers typify the trajectories of European states' immigration practices over the last decade. Towards this end, sovereign borders have been fortified with fences, walls, guard towers, drones, and surveillance technology. Along with monitoring territorial borders, police and enforcement agents patrol the interior territory and even other states' territories to detect and deter irregular residents and travellers. Third party actors hold lucrative contracts to build and manage many of these operations. This amplification of resources and power in the service of controlling people's movements across and within borders can be understood as a 'spectacle' of immigration control (Andersson 2014: 133-176; Brown 2014; De Genova 2002; generally, Debord 2006).

The enforcement arms of the spectacle exact heavy tolls. Re-routed migrants are injured and killed in record numbers. For example, the number of people dying while attempting to enter Europe is startling: in 2015, over 3,700 people drowned in the Mediterranean Sea, making it the deadliest year on record. These deaths accounted for 70 percent of migrant deaths documented globally and made the Mediterranean the world's 'most deadly region' for migrants (IOM 2016). Despite these dangers, migrants continue to journey to wealthy regions, with a sizable upswing in the recent past towards both Europe and the United States. The Syrian, Afghan, and Iraqi conflicts, as well as continued instability in Somalia, Sudan, and Eritrea, contribute to the high number of people attempting the Mediterranean voyage. Over the first 17 days of January 2016, approximately 18,000 people arrived on the Greek island of Lesbos. By comparison, 752 migrants had arrived in all of January 2015 (Mackinnon 2016). Likewise, the number of Central American families crossing the US border climbed to more than 61,000 'family units' and 51,000 unaccompanied minors in 2014, double the year before (Hylton 2015). These numbers continue to ebb and swell in reaction both to Mexico's reinvigorated and US-funded efforts to stop and return Central Americans as well as the continuing poverty, gang-related persecution, and generalized violence that afflicts the Northern Triangle area of Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala (Brigden & Mainwaring 2016, forthcoming; Rosenblum and Ball 2016).

Immigration detention plays a significant, yet often overlooked, role in the spectacle of migration enforcement. For example, European and other policymakers justify their detention systems by pointing to its perceived deterrent effects. United Kingdom (UK) Home Secretary Teresa May defends a detention-heavy 'deport first, appeal later' strategy. She argues that it 'is about making it harder for people to be working illegally and setting a clear deterrent for those that want to stay here illegally' (Wintour 2015). However, there is no credible proof that detention deters migration (e.g. Edwards 2011: 13; Sampson 2015). Such divergence between stated and realized objectives suggests that detention systems contribute to the spectacle of enforcement in a particularly valuable way.

This paper argues that observers and analysts of migration 'spectacles' and 'crises' are unduly overlooking the roles played by detention. We introduce the concept of detention-as-spectacle into the literature to deepen our understandings of the roles of both detention and the spectacular in migration governance. Detention-as-spectacle encapsulates the tautology that detention orders and even halts a 'crisis' of irregular migration that it simultaneously creates and reinforces. In other words, both the highly visible and subtler manifestations of detention imply the existence of a crisis of unregulated, undesirable migrants amassing; detention thus corroborates a populist impression that an out-of-control, unwanted, and potentially dangerous inflow of non-citizens is amassing at the gates while signaling that the state is working to identify and punish this population.

Further, detention-as-spectacle serves to project an image of the state's monopoly of power over its frontiers and non-citizen populations. This image is aimed at four audiences and works to obscure detention's human and financial costs as well as the state's limitations in controlling migration and its borders. On this new understanding, the paper demonstrates how detention's expansion is less related to government justifications of deterrence and national security, and more related to displaying sovereign power, thus potentially explicating the continuing expansion of detention despite mounting, persuasive evidence that it is harmful and ineffective at achieving its ostensible policy goals.

To unpack the phenomenon of detention-as-spectacle, we take the European Union as our framework and focus on the UK and Malta: these states, though situated on different EU peripheries, present striking similarities and differences in their take-up and exploitation of immigration detention. While only one part of the spectacle of immigration enforcement, detention is interdependent with the rise, development, and expansion of other enforcement mechanisms, including deportation, interdiction, and extraterritorial patrols. We interpret detention-as-spectacle in these states as emblematic of the patterns and dynamics happening to varying degrees across Europe.

The paper begins by reviewing detention operations in the UK and Malta, focusing on the expansion of and justification for these detention systems. We then examine the construction of migration crises along particular geopolitical fault lines, and how detention policies are presented as the evidence of and answer to these 'crises'. The third section takes up insights from the sociological and cultural politics literature on spectacle and its recent applications to activities along borders and in borderlands. We build on these sections to conceptualize detention-as-spectacle, and examine how it is both highly visible but also more subtly placed in the Maltese and UK landscapes. Employing the concept of detention-as-spectacle allows us to explore detention's contradictions, its forms of violence, its architectures, and its audiences. We conclude that detention-as-spectacle reinforces the criminalization of the detained population as well as reifies and exaggerates state power and the efficacy of detention policy. By rethinking detention as spectacle and theorizing its implications, our research reveals new dimensions of how the political spectacle reinforces social hierarchies and inequalities. We conclude with some reflections on the potential for disruption to detention-as-spectacle.

Fortifying the Union? Immigration Detention at the Frontiers of Europe

The territorial borders separating European states 'soften' as they join the European Union. This softening of the now-internal borders accompanies and justifies the hardening of the EU's common external border (Mainwaring 2014: 105; cf. Wolff 2008: 256). As a result, states along the southern and eastern European peripheries shoulder much responsibility for guarding the collective frontier. States with large international airports are also expected to act as gatekeepers. The UK and Malta, in particular, are located along a series of fault lines of migration and border control: they not only 'guard' their citizen-communities from unwanted outsiders, but Malta 'protects' Europe from African migrants arriving by boat, and the UK 'polices' Heathrow Airport, the most heavily trafficked airport in the world.[3]

Immigration detention has been key to fortifying the EU territorial frontier. The advocacy organization Migreurop (2014) estimates that almost 600,000 people are detained each year within the European Union. Measured through resource and capital appropriation and policy shifts, detention is a fast-growing branch of border and immigration control. Now present in every EU Member State, detention nonetheless differs across these states in terms of who is detained, for how long, at what point, with what legal safeguards, and for which official purposes (Silverman and Nethery 2015). For instance, while the French detention time limit is 32 days, the German limit is six months with a potential extension to 18 months in 'exceptional' circumstances. Such differences undermine the common European asylum system and the detainee transfer agreements embedded in the Dublin Regulation (Carrera & Guild 2010). The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR 2011) recognized these inconsistencies when it suspended transfers to Greece in 2011 due to inhuman and degrading conditions in detention and in Greece more broadly, as well as deficiencies in the asylum process.

Among Member States, the Maltese and UK detention systems stand out as cases of note. For example, Malta's time limit of 18 months positions it at the far end of maximum detention periods. The EU Commission (2014b: 5, 57-58) reported that, in 2013, the average length of detention in Malta was 180 days. This was not only the highest average in the EU, but three times higher than in any other Member State and four and a half times higher than the average of 40 days across EU Member States. Malta also has the unique status of holding a mandatory policy to detain upon arrival any person who enters without authorization.[4] For its part, the UK detention system is one of the largest in

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[3] Although the UK remains outside the Schengen system and thus maintains border controls with other EU countries, the area's existence and policies have an effect on the UK's own migration and border policies and politics. Indeed, as we show in this paper with regard to detention, many of its restrictive migration and border policies are in line with those seen across Europe.

[4] In December 2015, the Maltese government announced it would end the mandatory detention of asylum seekers, though it would continue to automatically detain other migrants arriving without authorization. The decision was encouraged by years of campaigning by national and international organizations, as well as successful challenges to immigration detention at the European Court of Human Rights (2013a; 2013b) in recent years. The move is also in line with amendments to the EU Reception Conditions Directive made in 2013. At the time of writing, the change has yet to be implemented (Dalli 2015).

Europe and the only one without a statutory upper time limit.[5]

The last decade has seen Malta and the UK spend more money to detain more people than ever before. The roles played by corporations and other security actors have expanded and been reinforced in tandem. This growth of immigration detention has occurred despite criticisms from local, regional, and international advocacy organizations, including recent national inquiries conducted in both states that concluded with strong calls for reform (All Party Parliamentary Group 2015; Valenzia 2014). The next sections explore these detention policies and state justifications for them in further detail. We argue that given the criticism, the availability of alternatives, and the lack of evidence that detention deters irregular immigration, Malta and the UK are employing detention as punishment and spectacle

The Expansion of Detention in Malta and the UK

In liberal democracies, the legal norm is that deprivation of liberty is exceptional. Therefore, national law must legislate *for* detaining migrants. According to international law, detention must be reasonable, proportional, non-arbitrary, adhere to due process, and be used only after non-custodial alternatives prove to be inadequate. Moreover, states' duty to offer protection to refugees means that the conditions on detaining asylum seekers are stricter than those for irregular residents or non-citizens with removal orders. The international framework also stipulates that since immigration detention is an administrative tool, it must be non-punitive. As pointed out in the literature, this administrative and non-punitive status presents a loophole whereby detainees are incarcerated for long periods of time without the attendant rights enjoyed by criminal offenders (e.g. Chacón 2014: 623).

The UK detention system evolved from an 'emergency' wartime technology into an everyday tool of migration management (Silverman 2012). Since its early origins in the Aliens Act 1905 and formal legislation in the Immigration Act of 1971, detention has trended towards a stricter practice with fewer opportunities for release. The figures bear out this pattern: until the early 1990s, overall numbers were low (about 200-300 detainees at any time) and asylum seekers were rarely detained or deported (Welch and Schuster 2005: 337). Thereafter, the daily population increased from 250 detainees in 1993 to over 2,250 in 2003 and then to around 4,000 in 2013 (Schuster 2004). Asylum seekers generally comprise about half the detention population.[6]

Detention centres have proliferated to house this growing population: while there was one UK detention centre in 1993, as of 2015, there are 15 official facilities, including short-term holding centres and 'immigration removal centres'. The Government subcontracts management of most facilities to private firms and the HM Prison Service. The system's physical infrastructure and regimes of surveillance and control are adapted from penal institutions. Penal-like characteristics include: CCTV and other electronic surveillance

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[5] The UK's position outside the Schengen zone has allowed it to opt out of the EU's Return Directive (2008), which sets an 18-month time limit on detention.
[6] The causal connections linking fewer offers of asylum and repressive detention practices, such as end-to-end and fast-tracked procedures, is explored elsewhere (e.g. Gibney 2008; Griffiths 2015).

mechanisms; the use of solitary confinement; transport vans with bars and guards; and the handcuffing of detainees. In FY 2013/14, the detention system cost taxpayers £164.4 million, with the cost of detaining one person for one year averaging £36,026.[7] The cost of detaining the majority of detainees eventually released is estimated at £76 million per year (Detention Action 2014: 7).

As in the UK, Maltese detention policy was formally legislated in 1970 with detainee numbers remaining minimal until an increase in unauthorized arrivals in 2002. The increase coincided with the run-up to Malta's 2004 accession into the EU, after which an 18-month time limit was set. Detention is ostensibly mandatory for every 'prohibited immigrant', who either arrives or is found in Malta without leave to remain. In reality, however, the population is comprised primarily of migrants and refugees rescued at sea by the armed forces. In line with the EU's 2003 directive on minimum reception standards, asylum seekers are released once their claims are successful or after 12 months' detention. The government's announcement in December 2015 that they will end the mandatory detention of asylum seekers will benefit this population if implemented. Nevertheless, as already noted, Malta currently detains individuals for longer on average than any other EU Member State (EU Commission 2014b: 5, 57-58).

As of 2014, Malta operated two primary detention facilities, both located in converted military barracks with overflow populations housed temporarily in police stations. Between 2002 and 2012, Malta detained 16,000 individuals, averaging 1,500 people per year. In 2008, the Maltese Government spent over €8.2 million on detention, an increase from €6.8 million in 2005 (Maltese Parliamentary Question 2009). That year, the system cost taxpayers an average of €23,000 per day.

The roles of security actors within detention have been reinforced as detention systems expand across Europe. Both Malta and the UK rely upon security actors to carry out their detention policies: a handful of multinational conglomerates manage and run most of the UK's detention centres, while in Malta the armed forces play a large role in housing and managing detention centres.[8] By employing private companies as early as 1970, the UK initiated a European precedent that is now commonplace. Moreover, the privatization of UK immigration detention predated, and perhaps catalysed, that of prisons and jails in their modern form (Menz 2011: 124). These security actors in Malta and the UK benefit from the roles they play in detention, and champion its use as an effective deterrent and form of immigration control. Their involvement also allows states to outsource legal, political, and moral liability for events occurring inside detention centres to varying

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[7] On top of these costs are additional compensation payouts related to cancelled flights, legal representation costs, and remuneration for unlawful detention. Between 2011 and 2014, for example, the UK Government paid nearly £15 million in compensation for unlawful detentions (The All Party Parliamentary Group 2015: 21).

[8] This reflects patterns in other countries, where privatization may or may not have occurred, but where the participation of other actors, such as the military and police, is commonplace. In Italy, for instance, border police operate particular detention facilities at ports of entry, such as Lampedusa. In Greece, former army camps and military barracks have been transformed into detention centres (ARCI 2012; cf. http://www.globaldetentionproject.org/countries/europe/greece/introduction.html).

degrees, arguably to a greater degree in the case of for-profit private actors (cf. Bacon 2005).

State Justifications for Detention: Security and Deterrence?

The UK and Maltese Governments remain stalwart that detention is not arbitrary, and that it stems irregular immigration flows. Policymakers in those countries defend detention as an integral aspect of the effort to control and manage borders and foreigners' movements. Notions of sovereignty and power over territory and admittance animate their discourse, and coalesce around the two themes of national security and deterrence. The security studies literature has demonstrated the corrosive effects of the creation in Europe of a continuum linking drugs, terrorism, immigration, asylum, and the internal market (e.g. Huysmans 2006; Huysmans & Buonfino 2008). In this section, we focus on how, in the UK and Malta, government rhetoric depends on the reification of 'national security' and the threat that irregular immigrants pose to it.

A survey of the modern history of the UK detention system demonstrates that now-familiar tools of identification and isolation were introduced in the lead-up to the First and Second World Wars, and the Gulf War, and normalized through an appeal to national security concerns during wartime (Silverman 2012). In Malta, policymakers justify strict detention policies with reference to the small size of the country and the 'disproportionate' numbers of unauthorised arrivals on the island (Mainwaring 2014; 2012). The Home Affairs Minister defended the national detention policy as the 'only way of safeguarding national security'. Despite a lack of evidence or precedent, the Minister also claimed detention was necessary in order to ascertain that migrants and refugees arriving without authorization were not terrorists (Times of Malta 2013). The recent Maltese and UK national inquiries found that this common strategy of justifying detention by equating them with national security risks achieves only the degradation of the human rights of detained and non-detained immigrants and asylum seekers (All Party Parliamentary Groups 2015; Valenzia 2014; cf. Dauvergne 2007).

Along with alleged national security issues, deterrence is also a key component of Maltese and British rationales for practicing and expanding their detention systems. While refuted by evidence (e.g. Edwards 2011: 13), detention has long-been touted as a deterrent mechanism, since as early as 1906 in the UK (Silverman 2012). In Malta, policymakers continue to perceive detention as a 'powerful deterrent' to unwanted immigrants (Mainwaring 2012). Beyond its effectiveness and the ethics of incarcerating people to dissuade others from undertaking journeys that are their legal rights to pursue, international law expressly prohibits using detention as a deterrent.

Harms of Detention

Detention exacts significant social, physical, and mental costs on detainees, their networks, and the broader communities in which they are located. Galina Cornelisse (2010: 21) points out the many problems in European detention centres result from overpopulation and inadequate medical, psychological, and hygienic care. Substantiating this, a 2009 Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) documents how detention in Malta endangers the physical and mental health of detainees, often having a long-term impact.

The report condemns the centres' appalling living conditions, barriers to healthcare, poor hygiene standards, and inadequate shelter (MSF 2009; cf. ECHR 2013a). Likewise, the deleterious effects of the UK detention centre are elaborated in a number of scientific studies (e.g. Robjant et al 2012; Sen et al 2014).

Detainees report feeling that their detentions reduce them to criminals, animals, or worse: former female UK detainees describe how '[t]hey are verbally abusive in here…They just see you like animals… The way they treat you. They want to get rid of you. You feel neglected and unwanted' (Girma et al 2014: 31). In extreme, though not uncommon, cases, detention becomes a matter of life and death: two men died in Malta after being beaten by detention staff in 2011 and 2012 (Aditus 2012), and at least 22 UK detainees have died since 1989 (Athwal 2015: 54).

Detention's expansion seems more inexplicable in light of the availability and viability of non-custodial, community-based supervision programs – known as Alternatives to Immigration Detention programs – that reduce the harm to enrolled non-citizens. A number of international advocacy organization endorse the implementation of Alternatives such as reporting requirements, structured community supervision, and case management programmes (e.g. Edwards 2011; IDC 2011; JRS 2012).[9] The organizations emphasize that alternatives to detention are more humane and cost-effective, while also meeting state goals that are often put forward to justify detention: (i) to prevent migrants and asylum seekers from absconding; (ii) to ensure that non-citizens cooperate with immigration officials in resolving their claims, in particular with regard to establishing their identity; and (iii) to effectuate deportation of non-citizens who are found to have no legal right to stay (Costello and Kaytaz 2013: 7).

Creating Crisis at the Border

How is it that detention systems costing so much but failing to achieve governments' stated goals and rationales are encouraged to grow even bigger? Such policy decisions are justified as defenses against migration 'crises'. However, as we argue here, these crises necessitating detention are manufactured in state's interests and sustained, at least in part, by detention itself. As Peter Andreas (2003: 3) points out in the US-Mexico borderlands context, immigration enforcement measures may be 'politically successful policy failures': in other words, detention succeeds in sending a message of sovereign power and control while failing in terms of its official policy aims.

Indeed, states have long selected certain migration flows to interpret and broadcast as crises. Since the end of the Cold War, these 'crises' are increasingly used to justify new measures of exclusion and externalization that reduce access to territory and rights, especially for the poor and those in need of international protection (Hyndman 2012). Laws, practices, and discourses work in tandem to seal borders against 'unwanted' non-citizens seeking admittance and residence. These processes of securitization and militarization root state-led efforts to 'contain' migrants through interdiction and

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[9] Moreover, the European Commission (2014b: 33-34) reports that 24 out of 26 surveyed EU Member States already afford alternatives to detention to those considered the most vulnerable.

detention, particularly in neighbouring states of the Global South (Chimni 1998; Huysmans 2000; Huysmans and Squire 2010).

'Crises' are *political* phenomena that mobilize fear, uncertainty, and a discourse of emergency (Milstein 2015: 142; Mountz & Hiemstra 2014: 384-85). Crises define and explain the 'problem' and its appropriate intervention (Widmaier et al 2007; Stanley 2014: 898). In doing so, their construction makes room for a politics and practice of exceptionalism, whereby routine responses are seen as insufficient and measures beyond the law are justified. For instance, Didier Bigo (2002: 72-73) reminds us of this initial political mobilization that can lead to the securitization of migration and that is overlooked in the securitization literature, which treats security as a separate sphere to politics. Detention-as-spectacle can thus be seen as a facet of 'securitization as everyday practice' (Ibid; cf. Léonard 2010).

Migration scholars find that states may create crises 'in order to legitimate grounds to implement what might otherwise be controversial security measures' (Hyndman 2012: 247; cf. Mountz & Hiemstra 2014). Successive Maltese Governments have interpreted migration as a crisis, with a particular focus on the state's small size and its geographic location on the EU's southern periphery; they have used this discourse to justify Maltese detention policy (Mainwaring 2012; 2014). In the UK, the discourse of a migration crisis dates back at least to 1978 when Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher warned that Britain would be 'swamped' by immigrant cultures. Defense Secretary Michael Fallon echoed these incendiary words in 2014, claiming that UK towns were 'swamped' by immigrants and their residents 'under siege' (Syal 2014). Contemporary UK and Maltese discourses feature sensationalist and unsubstantiated accounts of an uncontrollable inflow of immigrants catapulted by conditions in the unpatrolled migrant camps in Calais, France, political unrest in Libya, the duplicity and exploitation of smugglers operating across the Mediterranean Sea, and so on. These narratives construct a myth of invasion and crisis by obscuring the historical movement of people, armies, goods, and capital that contextualize current migration flows, as well as the role that states and their economic, migration, and foreign policies play in encouraging current forms of 'irregular' migration (cf. de Haas 2008; Mountz and Loyd 2014; Rigby and Schlembach 2013). In turn, the constructed crises create space for exceptional politics and practices and set the stage for a humanitarian and enforcement spectacle at the border and beyond.

The Border Spectacle

The minority of migrants and refugees who arrive at the EU's borders confront additional barriers of walls, 'push back' policies at sea, bilateral repatriation agreements, and, of course, a possibility of detention. Signalling a reassertion of sovereign power, control, and order, these measures are justified as the necessary response to migration 'crises' as well as evidence of the crises. Scholars describe such shows of force as a border spectacle, or a border game that fails to reach its goals. The spectacular nature conceals both the ineffectiveness and the inherent violence of these border manoeuvres (Andersson 2014; Andreas 2003; Brown 2014; de Genova 2002; Doty 2009; Husymans 2000).

Our conceptualization of detention-as-spectacle builds on this research and the insights of theorists examining the political spectacle. Our understanding moves past the spectacle at the border to the interior of the state. The analysis of detention-as-spectacle demonstrates how detention policies target resident populations as well as border-crossers, and thus contribute to the spectacle of sovereign control. In line with earlier observations, we conclude that the power of detention-as-spectacle's embrace is at least partially due to its success at obscuring its high costs and limited effectiveness as a deterrent and deportation mechanism.

The political and social theorist Guy Debord (2006: 7) argues that the spectacle 'is not a collection of images; it is a social relation between people that is mediated by images.' While a falsification of reality that distances people from their social realities, the spectacle is also a product of that reality. Contemporary scholars characterize the spectacle as producing an invisible curtain that separates the action that the audience has access to onstage from the purposeful 'allocation of values' that takes place backstage (Wright 2005: 664). This hidden backstage is also the site of allocating benefits accruing from financial opportunities or political influence. In the next two sections, we discuss the spectacle's roles in obscuring and making visible certain social and political processes.

Murray Edelman's (1988) theories of symbolic politics and political spectacle are particularly helpful for elaborating detention-as-spectacle. Edelman is interested in the significance of emotional politics and crisis discourse. Edelman contends that political problems gain life in popular discourse not because they are simply there but because they are reinforced constructs of a social reality and ideology that disseminate certain messages so as to appear self-evident (cf. Doty 2009: 66). Jef Huysmans' (2000: 762) study of EU security measures similarly concludes that the political spectacle is 'an institution through which meaning is conferred by evoking crisis situations, emergencies, rituals such as consultations or elections, and political myths.'

The language of the political spectacle is highly dependent on ambiguous metaphors. It relies on political stages, props, and the use of symbolic objects. In the case of the immigration crisis, this means a consistent return to images of bodies flooding across borders. The fact that UK officials echoed each other's swamping metaphors speaks to the import of this discourse. White (2002: 1056) describes the symbolic power of 'hydraulic' language in the UK:

> Flows may be 'out of control' threatening the livelihoods of all citizens, thus 'floods' of refugees or asylum seekers threaten to 'swamp' the state. Representing the state and refugee movements in such a simplistic, but seductively holistic, way legitimates the replacement of polyvocal, complex and chaotic stories and realities of migrant life with a monochrome universe of truth.

The spectacle's language produces emotional responses and facilitates actors' designation into roles as leaders, allies, and enemies. While selectively bringing acclaim or notoriety

to key political actors, the spectacle reduces anyone else coming into contact with it to a spectator.

The spectacle is also characterized by disconnects between means and ends. For instance, in the context of border control, the spectacle is performed under a mandate to stop a migration 'crisis' while simultaneously creating and reinforcing its appearance to the public. The studies of Nicholas De Genova (2004), Wendy Brown (2014), and Ruben Andersson (2014) are particularly useful here. For De Genova (2004: 177), a 'spectacle of enforcement' produces 'illegality' as a categorical identity for migrants. This spectacle is created through the staging of guards, vehicles, drones, and walls at the increasingly militarize US-Mexico border. After sustained performances, the spectacle of enforcement at the border and its bugaboo of the 'illegal alien' gain a 'commonsensical air of a "natural" fact' (De Genova, 2004: 177).

Andersson (2014) analyses border theatrics on and around the Canary Islands and the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. His analysis reveals the dual enforcement and humanitarian spectacles that occur around the border. As with theatre, these spectacles reveal only a sliver of a more complex reality. For instance, Andersson finds that the rescue of migrants at sea to be key to a humanitarian rescue narrative, but this narrative also acts as the proverbial curtain that obscures the detention centres and violence awaiting migrants once they reach the Canary Islands. Similarly, Brown analyses the construction and maintenance of walls as symbols and signifiers of territorial sovereignty in its twilight of decline. Brown (2014: 25) argues succinctly that, 'notwithstanding their strikingly physicalist and obdurate dimensions, the new walls often function theatrically, projecting power and efficaciousness that they do not and cannot actually exercise and that they also performatively contradict.' The next section reveals and examines detention's under-acknowledged roles in propagating the border spectacle and the spectacle of sovereign control in the European context.

Detention-as-Spectacle

In parallel with developments at the border, detention-as-spectacle has become an important facet of post-9/11 and post-7/7 immigration enforcement activities in Europe and North America. It is a visual display of power to showcase governments' actions against migrants categorized as 'illegal', both in terms of containment and punishment, as well as a signal of the deportation that will ostensibly follow. Such theatrics obscure the financial, social, and other costs of detention. Instead, by presenting the 'onstage' detention centres as models for efficiently deporting people, detention theatrics contribute significantly to the spectacle of sovereign control. In both of our case studies and elsewhere, detention-as-spectacle obscures the fact that most detainees are not deported,[10] and that those who are released fill labour market shortages (OECD 2014).

There are important similarities and differences between the border and detention spectacles. Echoing the border spectacle, detention-as-spectacle involves a disconnect

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[10] The European Commission (2014a) notes the gap between those issued a return order and those removed from EU territory: for example, in 2012, 484,000 people were given a return order and only 178,000 or 37% were removed. This trend was similar in 2011 (34%) and 2010 (37%).

between means and ends: although states commonly justify detention on the grounds that it acts as a deterrent and is necessary due to security concerns, there is little evidence that either of these goals are achieved through detention (Edwards 2011). Detention-as-spectacle is thus similar to the border spectacle that projects an image of state law and order, while simultaneously creating illegality and precarity. Both spectacles rest on and reinforce the assumption that migration can and should be 'managed'. The managed migration paradigm currently popular in liberal states, including the UK and Malta, characterizes unmanaged migration flows and the presence of irregular migrants as a problematic anomaly rather than an increasingly normal feature of society encouraged by state policies and labour market needs. Failures are interpreted as opportunities for better management. True reform is stymied (Doty & Wheatley 2013: 429).

However, in many ways, the detention spectacle is less dramatic than maritime rescues, racialized bordering practices, and electrified walls staged at the border. While policymakers may evoke detention to indicate sovereign control and managed migration, and national and other inquiries momentarily shine light on some of the darkest corners of the system, the material structures and everyday practices of detention remain obscured much of the time.

While detention practices and policies appear arguably less dramatic, they are noteworthy in the ways they resemble criminal punishment. Such criminalizing frames and manifestations contribute to the spectacle: while detention is ostensibly meant to punish rule-breakers, and to deter future migrants from similar behaviour, the ineffective nature of this goal is never apparent because of the overwhelming imagery projected by detention-as-spectacle. Beyond the use of re-rolled prisons and the aforementioned import of surveillance regimes from British and Maltese prisons, the similarity is apparent in the involvement of security actors, including the military, police, and correctional companies. Their profitable participation contributes to the militarized and penal nature of immigration detention and also defies governments' repeated protestations that detention is merely an administrative measure – the root of its legal sanctioning.

As with prisons, detention-as-spectacle is framed as a disciplining measure, as the sovereign infliction of 'regrettable but necessary' suffering upon rule breakers (Silverman 2012). As such, detention embodies the principle of less eligibility, 'a penal doctrine that dictates that prisoners must at all times experience conditions that are worse than what a poor and free human subject experiences out of prison' (Pugliese 2008: 210).[11] The inherent violence of detention is therefore made less visible (and spectacular), while a 'rational', disciplining logic is foregrounded (Foucault 1995). In this way, the real harms and costs of imprisonment without trial and limited judicial oversight are obscured and legitimated behind a façade of punishing rule-breakers, deterring unwanted foreigners, and combating a 'crisis'. Thus, detention-as-spectacle not only supports the

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[11] Bridget Anderson (2013: 25-26) locates the principle of 'less eligibility' in early attempts to control the mobility of the poor through policies such as Britain's 1834 Poor Law and workhouse tests. She argues these Victorian Era tests should be interpreted as predecessors for contemporary migration controls and debates.

criminalization of migrants and refugees, but also bolsters the power of the state. Symbolically, it signals that the state is responding to the 'crisis' of migration, creating order through punishment, containment, and exile in the face of uncontrollable flows of migrants.

As it punishes, detention-as-spectacle also creates distance between the detainee and the citizen: the detainee is constructed as deserving of punishment and as the dangerous 'other' through rhetoric, practice and material infrastructure (cf. Pugliese 2008). Many politicians stigmatize migrants as exhibiting racial, religious, linguistic, or other culturally different attributes to make them appear socially inassimilable and thereby threatening and deserving of incarceration (e.g. Bradford & Clark 2014; Yuval-Davis et al 2005). As Judith Butler (2009: 1) argues 'specific lives cannot be apprehended as injured or lost if they are not first apprehended as living'. The *other-ing* of non-citizens drives the increasing criminalization of immigrants and asylum seekers (Hernandez 2012; Malloch & Stanley 2005). The involvement of security actors across different forms of migration controls encourages the criminalization of migrants. Moreover, this stigma is usually racialized: debates in the UK, Malta, and elsewhere conflating migration, criminality, and imprisonment associate incarceration with racialized minorities, regardless of migrant status. Such prejudicial logic *others* migrants as threatening to the community, and normalizes recourse to detention. In turn, detention-as-spectacle serves to further criminalize working immigrants, bolster public suspicion of irregular immigration, and generate support for future enforcement actions, including more detention (cf. Mountz et al 2013).

Violent Spaces: The (In)visible Architecture of Detention-As-Spectacle

The spectacle is mediated by images, and thus the balustrade of detention-as-spectacle is its physical architecture. In both the UK and Malta, detention infrastructure reinforces the political messages and material realities of detention-as-spectacle, though sometimes in contradictory ways. Barbed wire, CCTV cameras, restricted access, confined and disciplinary spaces, and the absence of freedom of movement for detainees are typical characteristics of detention centres in Malta, the UK, and other European states. These features contribute to the discursive securitization and criminalization of migrants and refugees, while also having very real consequences for the mental, emotional, and physical health of detainees (cf. Chak 2014). The involvement of security and correctional companies, the military, and the police also amplifies the impacts of the architecture of detention within the spectacle. Detention spaces reinforce logics of deviance, threat, and punishment, while inflicting violence on detainees, their families and friends, and the communities in which they are embedded.

In her study of offshore detention centres, Alison Mountz (2015) observes how migration controls oscillate between invisibility and hypervisibility. Similarly, the architecture of detention centres located within the sovereign territories of the UK, Malta, and other states renders visible but also obscures detainees and detention policies. Detention-as-spectacle is a process of politicized and purposeful revelation and concealment, to stage certain actors and 'props' for consumption and interpretation by specific audiences at appointed times. Specifically, the architecture of detention makes hypervisible a sense of

an irregular immigration crisis, the logics of punishment and securitization, and a social distance between imprisoned detainees and citizens legally resident outside the gates. In the Australian context, Pugliese (2008: 213) argues that the transparent grid of the razor wire fences enclosing detention centres 'renders the imprisoned refugee into a figure of penal spectacle' and signals sovereign power over migration. Simultaneously, the spectacular architecture obscures the everyday violence that detention inflicts, the lives of those imprisoned, as well as 'the transnational communities, geopolitical relations, and colonial histories in which they are embedded and embroiled' (Mountz 2015: 186).[12]

UK and Maltese detention centres embody this in/visibility.[13] On the one hand, they tend to be located in rural areas. Their remoteness detaches detainees from legal representatives, as well as advocacy and kinship networks, leaving them further marginalized physically and socially. The centres' far-flung locations hide the material structures of detention, thereby obscuring – or pushing offstage – the violence within. Moreover, detention centres in Malta and the UK often adjoin prisons or military barracks. Immigrants and asylum seekers are 'hidden in plain sight' (cf. Pachirat 2011) and become further elided with the figure of the criminal. On the other hand, detention centres may become momentarily visible, in the media for example, during moments of protest or other disruption. In these instances, the visible architecture reinforces detainees' criminality reminding the citizen audience that their detention is warranted. As will be further explained in the next section, detention centres are made more continuously visible in a discourse that assures citizens that the state is 'tough on migration' and reminds noncitizens of their deportability. Indeed, even when the physical structures are absent from the landscape, the state uses the immigration enforcement spectacle to ensure that a threat of detention and deportation remains a conditioning facet of migrants' everyday life (De Genova 2002).

Detention's architecture in Malta and the UK mirrors detainees' collective lack of global mobility (cf. Bauman 1998). Maltese detention centres are located within operational military barracks, and are surrounded by high walls and chain-linked fences topped with barbed wire. The design promotes control, observation, and the denial of privacy and intimacy: for example, where detainees are housed in large rooms rather than warehouses, they are not permitted doors. Barred windows and limited outdoor access create further layers of exclusion. The military barracks' physicality not only transmits a message that migrants are criminals requiring confinement in securitized spaces, but also produces material barriers to access for/to the detainees. In response to calls in 2011 by the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture to allow visitation

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[12] William Walters (forthcoming, 2016) explores how deportation flights similarly have an ambiguous visibility, how they operate in the shadows while simultaneously acting as evidence of the state's tough stance on migration.

[13] Similarly, recent reports emerging from the Greek island of Lesbos's nascent 'hotspot' – a burgeoning 'policy solution' to the Syrian refugee crisis where Frontex officers can screen, register, and either grant temporary visas to asylum seekers or send 'economic migrants' back to North Africa – detail a highly securitized, brightly-visible detention centre abutting a town but secluded both because its doors are locked to outsiders and because it is on an island: located in a former military base, the Lesbos hotspot features 'a tall metal fence… guarded by police' that encircles 'a huge white tent (which can hold around 400 people)' (The Economist 2016).

rights, the Government responded that 'due to the layout of detention centres, which are located within active military barracks or police centres, regular visits cannot be allowed for security reasons' (Council of Europe 2013: 26).

In the UK, the Government commonly repurposes institutes for offenders into detention centres, which it calls immigration removal centres (IRCs). IRC Campsfield House was initially a Young Offenders Institution and the 19th century Dorset citadel Her Majesty's Prison the Verne was redesignated into a 595-bed IRC in 2014. IRC Dover on the scenic but secluded cliffs of Dover is notable for having been a Napoleonic fort, an army holding, a prison, and a young offender's institute, before being repurposed to house migrants and asylum seekers in 2002. The link between its carceral history and its current incarnation is plainly indicated by the dry moat that continues to encircle it.[14]

The Audiences of Detention-as-spectacle

As argued above, detention-as-spectacle serves to project an image of sovereign power, control, and order over non-citizens. There are at least four audiences for detention-as-spectacle since it: (i) signals the vulnerability of irregular migrants living in the state to their potential detainability and deportability; (ii) projects out from state borders to would-be migrants, to discourage them from attempting to reach a particular border; (iii) works to assure the local population that their government holds the monopoly of power over territorial borders and mobility; and (iv) demonstrates to other states and international organizations that the sovereign is in control of its borders.

In terms of the two migrant audiences within and outside the state, the UK and Maltese Governments encourage the belief that detention deters irregular immigration. The UK Government frequently references its use of end-to-end mandatory detention as a means to deter fraudulent claims and would-be irregular immigrants (Silverman 2013: 38-39). In Malta, policymakers point to the 18-month mandatory detention policy as a means of facilitating deportation of refused asylum seekers and other migrants. Due to a lack of diplomatic relations with countries of origin, administrative hurdles, lack of documentation, and other bureaucratic issues, however, both Governments fail to deport many detainees.

With regard to the third citizen audience, the imposing architecture of immigration enforcement magnifies the impression of successful state control. Prison-like detention centres are detention-as-spectacle's political stages and props. They are visual cues for citizens to 'learn' that their state exercises a monopoly of power over non-citizens and its territory. When citizens do see detention centres, the spectacle is mediated by frames that construct detainees as criminals or villains who belong in these carceral institutions. The UK and Maltese case studies cohere with the tautology identified by Mountz and her co-authors (2013: 527): 'migrants *might* be criminals, necessitating detention; migrants *must* be criminals, because they are detained.'

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[14] Our case studies are not exceptional in their use of securitized spaces for immigration detention. For example, two-thirds of Spanish detention centres occupy former penitentiaries or military barracks, with conditions similar to those within prisons (Jarrín Morán et al 2012). Most Australian detention centres have also repurposed ex-military barracks and demountables (Pugliese 2008, 207).

Finally, detention-as-spectacle is directed outward from the host state to other states and international organizations. This aspect of the spectacle reinforces multiple logics. First, it demonstrates a state's sovereign power over its borders and the associated authority to decide who is allowed to stay and who is deemed inadmissible and deportable. The control of state borders and the management of immigration flows can become symbols of a state's development, strength, and political dependability. A relatively recent historical phenomenon, this interpretation is seen, for example, in foreign aid agreements that oblige the recipient state to increase its border security and, in some cases, to assume responsibility for the donor state's immigration controls.[15]

The second logic directed at this fourth audience of other states is one of simultaneous chaos and control (Mountz & Hiemstra, 2014). This narrative presupposes a large volume of irregular immigration. Similar to the criminal-detainee tautological loop, states portray irregular immigration as out of control and disproportionate in order to justify detaining people and to project an impression that the state is, and ought to be, entitled to do so. That detention policy *must* construct such migrant flows as problematic or be rendered less relevant is key to detention-as-spectacle. In this way, detention-as-spectacle is always directed towards a domestic as well as international audience. In regional arrangements, it can act as a salient message to other states and international organisations. This is especially the case in Malta where detention is justified on the basis that the state faces disproportionate levels of irregular immigration relative to its size and thus the state carries excessive responsibility within the European Union. In Malta's demands for more financial and practical support from the EU, the detention policy symbolizes the island's 'migration crisis' and detention, in turn, works to reinforce a rhetoric that the crisis is threatening Europe (Mainwaring 2012).

Conclusion

Detention-as-spectacle elucidates state interests in maintaining detention policies much more satisfactorily than the conventional justifications that detention facilitates deportation, deters irregular immigration, and protects the national community from security risks. Drawing on Malta and the United Kingdom as case studies, our analysis of detention-as-spectacle reveals the contradictions involved in the policies, practices, discursive frames, and justifications of immigration detention. The analysis points to the interplay between visibility and invisibility, and reveals what is concealed in the spectacle, from detention's inherent and everyday violence to its financial costs and its failure to meet its own policy goals of deterrence and deportation. Our analysis highlights the tension between a liberal, technocratic language of 'management' and administrative measures uttered in the same breath as a language of deterrence, security, and punishment. It unveils how detention acts not only to criminalize migrants and create the spectre of the 'illegal alien' but also to demonstrate and reinforce sovereign power. We illustrate how detention is crucial in constructing the impression of a crisis, thereby proffering itself as a 'solution' to a manufactured problem.

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[15] Examples of such agreements include the Cotonou Agreement between the EU and a group of African, Caribbean, and Pacific states; the Security and Prosperity Partnership between the US, Canada, and Mexico; and the Regional Resettlement Arrangement between Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Socially and politically, detention-as-spectacle makes visible and renders invisible, it perpetuates myths and creates distance between people and reality, and between citizens and noncitizens. By exploring how detention acts as spectacle, our intervention contributes to the literature on detention by not only demonstrating how the spectacle reinforces the criminalization of the detained population but also reifies and exaggerates state power and the efficacy of detention policy. Moreover, theorizing detention as spectacle demonstrates how the political spectacle works more generally to reinforce social hierarchies and inequalities.

Detention centres are normalized and embedded within the immigration landscape across Europe and other continents. While the political spectacle silences dissent, detainees and their supporters sometimes interrupt the carefully constructed theatre. Around the globe, detainees engage in acts of everyday resistance, and sometimes in acts of more radical protest, from hunger strikes to lip sewing to escape. In these moments, spectators inside and outside the detention centres become compelled to act more forcefully to dismantle detention-as-spectacle and its narrative of crisis and control.

In both our case studies, resistance has recently erupted to refocus attention on the violence of detention. In March 2015, undercover investigative journalists in the UK filmed staff inside IRC Yarls Wood uttering racist, violent, and derogatory comments about detainees. The exposés came shortly before the release of the national public inquiry's report criticizing many aspects of daily detention life. Protesters staged demonstrations inside and outside IRC Yarls Wood and IRC The Verne, and reports emerged of peaceful protests and hunger strikes at six additional UK detention sites (Silverman 2015).

Similarly, in Malta, the 2012 death of a 32-year-old Cameroonian asylum seeker at the hands of detention staff sparked protests inside and outside detention centres and prompted a public inquiry. Documenting the shortcomings precipitating violence and abuse, the inquiry's report, released in late 2014, adds to the chorus of criticism levied against the Government by NGOs and international actors, including the European Court of Human Rights (Valenzia 2014). Ruling against Malta in two cases brought by former detainees, the Court concluded that Maltese detention policy hinders human rights protection (ECHR 2013a; 2013b). These developments have led the Government to announce that they will end the mandatory detention of asylum seekers in 2016.

Pulling back the curtain on the spectacle, these acts of resistance force acknowledgement of the violence inherent in detention systems. They momentarily allow spectators and those scripted as 'others' to redirect and transform the narrative, to make visible what has previously been obscured, and to narrow the distance between noncitizen detainee and citizen spectator. However, although such disruptions to the spectacle can produce piecemeal reform, as recent developments in Malta indicate, the hypervisible narrative of detention-as-spectacle and its ordering role in the false crisis of irregular immigration continues to hold sway, both onstage and off.

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