

DEPORTATION, DEPORTABILITIES AND RACIAL FORMATIONS

**COLONIAL CONTINUITIES OF EUROPEAN DEPORTATION
PRACTICES AND THEIR EXTERNALIZATION**

HANNA RETA BARFUSS

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DEPARTMENT OF GENDER STUDIES – FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

SUPERVISOR: DR. KOEN LEURS

SECOND READER: DR. CHRISTINE QUINAN



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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the European migration control and its externalization in its colonial continuities, through the focus on the entanglement of deportations, deportabilities and racial formations. In doing so, this thesis echoes the demand for critical migration and border studies that consider colonial continuities and thus create a nuanced understanding of migration control, omitting neither temporal and spatial particularities nor continuities, and heightening the perception of the relations of domination to which the control of mobilities is always tied to. In order to approach these complex relations, the question is raised: “How are deportations, deportabilities and racial formations entangled in and through the European control of migrant mobilities and the externalization of this control?” Thus, the complex entanglement of deportations and racial formations is approached not alone in the actual moment of deportation, but also in the prospect of deportations: the condition of being liable to deportation. Based on decolonial conceptualizations of racial formations, I address this question in three different spatiotemporal sites: using different sources and the colonial imaginaries revealed or contained therein, I examine the entanglement of deportations, deportabilities and racial formations in Switzerland, in the Central Mediterranean and in Algeria. This enables to demonstrate the particularities but also structural similarities of this entanglement in different spatiotemporal sites. Further, this question is examined considering the interconnections between different deportations practices and racial formations through the increasing outsourcing of European migration control and deportations. Thus, this thesis contributes to a rethinking of deportations and deportabilities and their outsourcing as a racialized and racializing mechanism that is deeply embedded in relations of domination – and therewith, it is intended to contribute to the repoliticization of the often unnoticed and normalized bordering practice of deportation.

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INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, European control of migrant mobilities¹ has been more and more outsourced. Migrant mobilities are controlled, halted and from time to time forced into an unintended direction – in but also outside Europe. More and more actors are spinning a tight net of surveillance, detention and deportation of migrants. In order to grasp the multifaceted creation of this net of control, the concept of externalization has been elaborated. This concept encompasses mechanisms, forms of collaboration, policies and the particular implementations of controlling and halting migrant mobilities, through which Europe’s migration politics interests are enforced outside of geographical Europe. This concept thus refers to the outsourcing of migration control and bordering practices to actors that are not members of the European Union and implies the “territorial expansion of border controls beyond (the EU’s) territorial limits.”² Research using the concept of externalization has in recent times come under criticism for Eurocentrism: On the one hand, such research often focuses on the interests and power of European states and fails to take into account the interests and agencies of migrants and of the (state) actors to whom migration control is outsourced.³ On the other hand, a major criticism of this concept concerns its omission of the colonial continuities that structure these policies.⁴

I want to start at this point. In this thesis, I use the concept of externalization, since the outsourcing of migration control is a central yet under-researched facet of European migration and border politics. But, and here I intend to challenge the dominant research on externalization, I focus on the colonial continuities of the European migration control and its outsourcing. It is impossible to examine the colonial continuities and continuations of European externalization politics in its entirety. Therefore, I place deportations at the center of this thesis. The practices of deportation, the forced border crossings in an unintended direction in the context of migration, is one of multiple bordering practices. In the scope of the outsourcing of European migration control, deportations are of particular interest: On the one hand, deportations are often conducted in cooperation with third states. Thus, this bordering practice is both based on and further strengthening the cooperation between European member states and third states. On the other hand, deportations are not conducted across European borders alone. In the process of outsourcing European migration control, more and more third states are implementing or

¹ In this thesis, I use both the term migrant mobilities and migration to refer to politicized forms of mobilities, following the thought that “migration regimes produce the transformation of mobility into politics.” (Tsianos and Karakayali 2010, 378).

² Korvensyriä 2017, 197.

³ Beznec and Kurnik 2020; Cases-Cortes, Cobarrubias and Pickles 2015; Derrider, Pelckmans and Ward 2020, Ould Moctar 2020.

⁴ El Tayeb 2011; Korvensyriä 2017, Lemberg-Pedersen 2019, Ould Moctar 2020; Beznec and Kurnik 2020.

intensifying existing deportation practices. The implementation of deportation practices is sometimes initiated in Europe: Through agreements, funding and political support, Europe induces third states to contain migrants, as transmediterranean deportations indicate. Sometimes, however, deportations from third countries are in a less linear relation to European migration control, as I intend to demonstrate using the example of Algerian deportation practices. But even in relation to the Algerian deportation practices one must consider European politics, even if there is no direct funding and agreements: It is this form of indirect and almost imperceptible externalization of migration control that is not well addressed, both in academic debates and activist practices in the place where the responsibilities for externalization lie: in Europe.

To return to the initial point of criticism of the concept of externalization: As critical scholars outline, research on the externalization of European migration control often centers the interests of Europe and omits the interests of those cooperating in spinning the net of controlling migrant mobilities.⁵ Furthermore, most research on European border control does not take into account the colonial continuities in both the European control of migrant mobilities and its outsourcing.⁶ The focus on deportations enables to counter both of these shortcomings: The direct and in particular the indirect cooperation of non-European states in spinning a net of deportations indicates that the outsourcing of European bordering practices is not alone about European interests and influence. It is also about the interests of the cooperating non-European actors and, what is at the heart of this thesis, it is about a form of domination structured through colonial continuities and continuations.

In order to grasp these colonial continuities and continuations I intend to examine deportation practices in their entanglement with racial formations. How do racial formations relate to colonial continuities, one might ask. I intend to address this question using a nuanced theorization of race from decolonial approaches. These theorizations trace the emergence of race in and through European imperialism, colonialism and colonial relations of domination.⁷ Race becomes apparent as a rationale used to delineate the human from the human other, a delineation that is at the heart of relations of domination. In and through these relations of domination, those constructed as the human other become exploitable, are oppressed and made die, as the decolonial thinker Achille Mbembe has theorized.⁸ In this thesis, I use the term of the human other condition to denote the condition the human other is subjected to, to refer to the realities of life produced through the

⁵ Beznec and Kurnik 2020; Cases-Cortes, Cobarrubias and Pickles 2015; Derrider, Pelckmans and Ward 2020, Ould Moctar 2020.

⁶ El Tayeb 2011; Korvensyrjä 2017, Lemberg-Pedersen 2019, Ould Moctar 2020; Beznec and Kurnik 2020.

⁷ Quijano 2000, 534.

⁸ Mbembe 2019.

construction of the human other. Racial formations as a basis for the creation of the human other condition assume multiple forms and meanings: as it is a rationale expressing the interests of dominant social conditions,⁹ racial formations are in constant transformation and adaptation to the transforming social conditions and relations of domination.

In this thesis, I consider deportations as based upon and reinstating relations of domination that are in continuation of colonial relations of domination: a global condition of domination and exploitation that is rationalized through racial formations. The control of mobilities along racial lines is an important aspect of the maintenance of this global condition of domination and exploitation. Deportations, as I intend to examine through this thesis, are not alone underpinned and underpinning these relations of domination in the actual moment of deportations. The creation of the condition of being liable to deportation is an inherent aspect of deportation power: It is not a coincidence that not all those deportable are deported but a lot of people remain in the condition of being deportable for decades. The concept of deportabilities enables to recognize that the condition of being liable to deportations is in the interest of neoliberal economies, and, as I outline in this thesis, also in the interest of the maintenance of racial domination. Thus, deportations and deportabilities create multifaceted global and local conditions of domination and exploitation along racial lines. This brings us close to the question that will guide this thesis: “How are deportations, deportabilities and racial formations entangled in and through the European control of migrant mobilities and the externalization of this control?”

METHODOLOGIES

The questions raised in this thesis root in decolonial thought that sheds light on the colonial continuities and continuations in and through modern societal structures. In this thesis, I intend to tackle the colonial continuities in and through deportations and deportabilities. To uncover these continuities, I use racial formations as a point of entry. I attempt to unravel the creation of racial formations and the transformation of this rationale to delineate the human from the human other from a decolonial perspective. This is meant to provide a basis for a closer examination of the entanglement of deportations with racial formations as the examination of this entanglement requires a clear understanding of race. I cannot take this understanding for granted, as I was raised as a white person in Switzerland where race is “buried alive,”¹⁰ as I will demonstrate. Race is unrecognized and unutterable, hidden in other concepts and framings such as religion and culture. Yet the consequences of racial formations as a line delineating the human from the human other

⁹ Goldberg 1992, 544.

¹⁰ Goldberg 2006, 338.

are as blatant as they would be if race was recognized and uttered. These consequences are palpable in every deportation, even if the entanglement of deportations and racial formations is hidden behind other frames and concepts.

I intend to base the examination of the entanglement of racial formations, deportations and deportabilities in three different spatiotemporal sites on the concept of assemblage of power. This concept emerged from an engagement with and continuation of Foucault's understanding of power.¹¹ It allows to recognize the simultaneities of multiple forms of power and their constitution and deconstruction in multiple sites and through multiple, sometimes contesting, actors.¹² The understanding of the multiplicities of power was related to mobilities by the two migration theorists Brett Neilson and Sandro Mezzadra. The two authors use of the assemblage of power concept to designate the complex processes of disintegration of once state powers and their reconfiguration in and through the control of migration.¹³ The assemblage approach is the basis for understanding that deportation and deportabilities cannot be understood through the sole examination of the legal frameworks. Rather, multiple actors, practices, technologies and discourses shaping deportations and deportabilities: In this thesis, I focus on the entanglement of deportations and deportabilities with racial formations to demonstrate the complexities and multiplicities in the formation of practices of deportations and deportabilities and the colonial continuities inherent in these practices – thus, the multiplicities of power part of the formation and transformation of deportations, deportabilities and racial formation in a complex entanglement. I make no claim to an exhaustive examination of this assemblage of power – for one thing, such an examination is beyond the scope of a thesis. For another, it is impossible, since my situated knowledges, experiences and socialization have been formed through the racial formations and colonial continuities that are examined in this work. Moreover, me and my investigation constitute a part of the assemblage of power that form racial formations, deportations and deportabilities in their entanglement. “We are of the connections,”¹⁴ migration thinker Nicholas De Genova once aptly titled: considering and examining migration and migrant mobilities “merely implicates us further, more directly, more immediately.”¹⁵ Thus, I am always part of what I am investigating in this thesis.

The multiplicities of actors, practices, technologies and discourses forming deportations and deportabilities in their entanglement with racial formations require multimethodological approaches. On the one hand, a genealogical approach to the emergence of racial formations and

¹¹ Kasperek 2021, 34.

¹² Tsianos and Karakayali 2010, 375.

¹³ Mezzadra and Neilson 2013, 195.

¹⁴ De Genova 2013.

¹⁵ De Genova 2013, 252.

their transformations through time and space will be applied. This genealogical approach is intended to demonstrate that racial formations stand in temporal and spatial continuations but still entail considerable differences through time and space. These differences and continuities will be elaborated through the use of the work of decolonial thinkers and historians on the formation and transformation of racial formations. Furthermore, I intend to use an approach to policies and their implementation that relies on Ann Laura Stoler's understanding of archives. In Stoler's (2009) work "Along the Archival Grain," she examines the colonial knowledge inherent in the archives of the Dutch Ministry of Colonial Affairs. Stoler's investigation is based on an understanding of archives as a place of the imagined.¹⁶ The conceptualization of the archive as a place of the imagined is taken up in this thesis and expanded to practices: Deportation policies, deportations and their prospects are understood as a place of the imagined and of imagining in which colonial imaginaries are inherent and through which these imaginaries are reformed and reproduced. This approach allows us to recognize the extent to which colonial imaginaries and racial formations are perpetuated and reshaped in different forms, through different actors – and thus the extent to which actors, practices, technologies and discourses shape deportations and deportabilities in the different spatiotemporal sites I shed light on in this thesis.

SPATIOTEMPORAL SITES

To trace the entanglement of racial formations, deportations and deportabilities, I consider sources from three different spatiotemporal sites. The hidden entanglement of deportations and racial formations are one reason for the choice of the first site on the basis of which I attempt to unravel this entanglement: contemporary Switzerland. In the third chapter, I examine how Switzerland's particular racial formations and racisms translate into legislation for deportations, as it has been the case in the "Ausschaffungsinitiative" (deportation initiative). This popular initiative demands that non-Swiss citizens are punished in a different form than Swiss citizens are when it comes to certain crimes: In addition to the punishment foreseen for Swiss citizens, non-Swiss citizens are to be deported. On the basis of this popular initiative, it becomes apparent that racial formations and colonial imaginaries underlie deportations. More than that, racial formations are reinscribed and transformed through this initiative as meaning is ascribed to the human and the human other. Racial formations also shape the condition to which the deportable human other is subjected: the condition of being liable to deportation. I intend to capture this condition through the concept of deportabilities and demonstrate how not alone the actual deportation but also deportabilities

¹⁶ Kasperek 2021, 46.

transform the line delineating the human from the human other – and how this line still remains permeated by colonial imaginaries and continuities.

Colonial imaginaries can also be recognized in the second site of deportations that I choose to elaborate on in the fourth chapter. I focus on the Central Mediterranean as a site of deportations as it is on the one hand exemplary for the direct outsourcing of deportations: In the last decade, a shift from transmediterranean pushbacks to pullbacks has occurred, from conducting deportations themselves, European actors have proceeded to coordinate the deportations and fund other actors, in this case the so-called Libyan Coast Guard, to conduct pullbacks in their interest. On the basis of this shift, the multifaceted entanglement of deportations with racial formations becomes apparent: European racial formations, rooted in colonial imaginaries of the human and the human other are mobilized but transmediterranean deportations are also a means to ascribe further meaning to the human and the human other. These racial formations are all the more obvious in this site of deportations, as the Mediterranean is of high symbolic relevance as the moat of Fortress Europe into which the line of demarcation of the European human and the non-European human other cuts deep. So deep that those constructed as the non-European human other are exposed to incredible cruelties: the human other condition is created.

The human other condition can also be captured in relation to the Algerian deportation practice that I center in the fifth chapter. The Algerian deportation practice is to be put in the context of the outsourcing of the European control of migrant mobilities, even if this is not evident at first glance. I intend to sharpen this perception through outlining the interconnection between European bordering practices and Algerian deportations. This interconnection might lead to the conclusion that the Algerian deportation practice is alone a consequence of the European control of migrant mobilities and the racial formations that are entangled with this control. This is too short-sighted: The Algerian state has its own interests in the deportation of those constructed as the human other and as the non-belonging. However, the line delineating the human from the human other differs from the European racial formations – racial formations in their formation and transformation in the spatiotemporal context of Algeria must be included in order to gain a nuanced understanding of the entanglement of the Algerian deportations, deportabilities and racial formations.

This brings me back to my point of departure: I consider the practice of deportations as part of the net of control and halting of migrant mobilities, which is being spun in the interest of Europe. But those spinning this net pursue their own interests in it and are spinning it against the

background of their particular social conditions and relations of domination. These social conditions and relations of dominations are also the conditions in which one has to consider racial formations as a line delineating the human from the human other. In this thesis, relations of domination are to be included in the examination of deportations through the lens of racial formations: “How are deportations, deportabilities and racial formations entangled in and through the European control of migrant mobilities and the externalization of this control?” This main question is intended to create an understanding of colonial continuities in and through deportations and deportabilities. Through the exploration of three sites of deportations, Switzerland, the Central Mediterranean and Algeria, I examine deportations and deportabilities as both racialized and racializing. I intend to outline the racial formations underpinning deportations, both considering the colonial continuities shaping racial formations and their transformations in space and time. Deportations and deportabilities, however, are not alone based upon racial formations. The bordering practices are also a means to reinforce but also transform racial formations and the relations of domination that are rationalized through race. Thus, the entanglement of racial formations, deportations and deportabilities is multifaceted. The examination of this entanglement in different spatiotemporal sites enables to recognize that this entanglement is multifaceted and not universal – but, as I intend to demonstrate, there are structural connections between different forms of entanglement nonetheless – and in examining them, I hope to contribute to the re-politicization of deportations.¹⁷

¹⁷ See Carmel, Lenner, Paul 2021.

CHAPTER 1

RACIAL FORMATIONS

Race and racialization are theorized in multiple ways. Each of them has different implications for understanding contemporary forms, configurations and articulations of race, racialization and racisms. In this thesis, I address racial formations in relation to the colonial continuities of the European border regime, particularly in their entanglement with deportations and deportabilities. Racial formation, as the critical race theorists Michael Omi and Howard Winant define it, is “the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed and destroyed.”¹⁸ Multiple attempts, moments and practices of representation and organization of human bodies and social structures constitute this process.¹⁹ These attempts, moments and practices must be linked to the formation and transformation of hegemonies. Thus, thinking about racial formations means thinking about the process of organizing and representing human bodies in its connections to hegemonies.²⁰ This enables us to understand “how the race concept has been mobilized differently in structuring specific racisms and their hierarchies of difference.”²¹

Racial formations are thus not universal but imply multiplicities, an insight that is at the heart of this thesis. The examination of the entanglement of racial formations with deportation practices and deportabilities is to be built on this insight: The racial formations that underlie deportation practices are, while being reinscribed and reshaped through these practices, embedded in spatial and temporal specific hegemonies and are therefore characterized by difference and multiplicities. These multiplicities, however, imply that racial formations cannot be considered in isolation from each other. Rather, as decolonial and postcolonial thinkers point out, multiple racial formations are situated in temporal continuities. This is not meant to suggest a linear picture. The notion of continuities is rather “implying neither causality nor finality, but instead open-ended processes. Here, continuity [is] understood as the solidification and stabilization of particular elements or practices [that] can lead to their reoccurrence over time.”²²

Continuities are not to be located on a temporal axis alone. One has further to consider the spatial continuities and entanglements of multiple racial formations. To this end, the critical race theorist David Theo Goldberg introduced the concept of racial regionalization. This concept prompts a

¹⁸ Omi and Winant 2002, 125.

¹⁹ Omi and Winant 2002, 125.

²⁰ Omi and Winant 2002, 124.

²¹ Stoler 2002, 370.

²² Lemberg-Pedersen 2019.

relational account of the particularities of regional racial formations,²³ without obscuring that “racial ideas and arrangements circulate, cross borders, shore up existing or prompt new ones.”²⁴ These circulation and transformations, however, are to be understood in their embeddedness in colonial histories, and thus, an account of racial formations in their manifold spatial and temporal continuities emerges. Therewith, Goldberg sets high but crucial methodological standards: the examination of racial formations must go beyond comparing and contrasting, but is about connecting.²⁵ It is about connecting multiple racial formations in their circulation and interrelations, both outlining these interrelations and elaborating the specificities and particularities of multiple racial formations, at all times in recognition of the structures within which multiple interconnected but different racial formations emerge. In the following, the structures that shape racial formations in their multiple, transforming forms, will be outlined based on the nuanced and extensive work of decolonial thinkers. Therewith, I intend to offer a basis for the further discussion of racial formations in their temporal and spatial particularities.

1.1. RACIAL FORMATIONS AND THE HUMAN

The fact that I am drawing on decolonial theories in order to understand contemporary racial formations is based on an assumption: The power structures that were formed in and through imperial expansion and colonialism continue to this day. Thus, racial formations cannot be considered in isolation of the colonial continuities structuring dominant forms of power and relations of domination.

In decolonial approaches, the present dominant forms of power are comprehended with the concept of coloniality. Coloniality, differing from colonialism as a political and economic relation,²⁶ denotes an order, a definition of culture, labor, intersubjective relations and knowledge production that has emerged from colonialism. Coloniality emerged with the conquest of the Americas. With and through the Western expansion to the Americas, an order has been created that was soon to take on significance far beyond this spatiotemporal context. It was to become the Eurocentric scheme for making sense of the world, it was to become “[...] the very basis of what was then going to become modern identity, inescapable framed by world capitalism and a system of domination structured around the idea of race.”²⁷ Thus, the relations of domination that emerged with European colonialism and imperialism are structured by the invention of race as a form of

²³ Maldonado-Torres 2010, 83.

²⁴ Goldberg 2009a, 1274.

²⁵ Goldberg 2009a, 1276.

²⁶ Maldonado-Torres 2007, 243.

²⁷ Maldonado-Torres 2007, 244.

social classification.²⁸ This social classification, rationalized through the construct of race, is characterized through the horizontal rather than vertical relation that is imposed upon the subjects of racial classification.²⁹

The patterns of thought shaping the construction of race and thus the relations of domination, however, have not emerged with imperial expansion and colonialism, but are dating back much further. The formation and transformation of the patterns of thought that enabled coloniality and racial formations to emerge are carved out in Sylvia Wynter's decolonial retelling of the history of the human. In an extensive, detailed narration she outlines how the construct of the human has transformed in accordance to and in interplay with the transformation of patterns of thought and of explanations of the world. She elucidates the transition of the descriptive statements of the human over time, traces the transition of the theological framework for the human into the rational and eventually biological, and demonstrates that "the theological served as a template for the biological."³⁰

Wynter begins her examination of the human's transformation in the time of the European Renaissance. It was a time in which the relation of God to the human was reformulated, a reformulation that renders the human into knowing beings that recognize and explain the world which no longer follows arbitrary rules.³¹ This transformation was foundational for the reformulation of the theocentric into a ratiocentric form of the human. But it did not erupt in a bang. Rather, as Wynter points out, the humanists had to rely on theological epistemes to intervene in theological worldviews and had to argue along the structures of the theocentric form of the human to make themselves intelligible and heard. The transformation from theocentric to ratiocentric statements of the human thus did not lead to a fundamental transformation of the patterns of thought; rather, the ratiocentric human has been shaped within the same patterns of thought as the theocentric form of the human. The human, both in its theocentric and ratiocentric form, is built in demarcation to the human other. In other words, the construction of the human other is needed for the human to exist. The human other is inherent in the human, they are inextricably linked to each other. But whereas in the theocentric order, the human other had been located within a theological framework, with the transformation into a ratiocentric form of the human, another framework has been adduced to define the human other – the framework of rationality. Within the framework of rationality, the human was framed as the rational political

²⁸ Quijano 2000, 534.

²⁹ Maldonado-Torres 2007, 244.

³⁰ Serynada 2015.

³¹ Wynter 2003, 278.

subject of the state, in demarcation to the irrational human other. The emergence of this framework of the human is intertwined with the rise of modern states, imperial expansion and colonialism³² – and it was in this context that the human other was reformulated.

The decolonial thinker Nelson Maldonado-Torres calls the seeking of the human other Manichean skepticism. He describes that with the conflation of rationality and humanness there is always the question of irrationality, and thus of the human other. Manichean skepticism denotes this question, it denotes the interrogation and questioning of the humanness of colonized people,³³ and thus the creation of coloniality of being. Coloniality of being is a concept that captures the creation and subordination of the human other against the European model of the human. It attempts to theorize the construction of hierarchical being that “organized different social positions, different roles and different rights for individuals [and ascribed] different human value.”³⁴ Maldonado-Torres refers to this differentiation as the ontological colonial difference:³⁵ a philosophical concept that I understand in simplified form in this thesis as the delineation between the human and the human other that roots in colonial relations of domination. The point here is that with rationality as human, irrationality is constructed as different, other than human, a construction that is inherent in the human. Those who were rendered into embodiments of irrationality and thus of the human other were those who were subjugated in the course of Western expansion and colonialism: “the peoples of the military expropriated New World territories (ie. Indians), as well as the enslaved people of Black Africa (i.e., Negroes), [...] were made to reoccupy the matrix slot of Otherness – [...] into the physical referent of the idea of the irrational/subrational Human Other.”³⁶ The ratiocentric form of the human thus relied upon the construction of the irrational human other and the negation of its humanness.³⁷

This scheme, constructing the human and human other along the lines of ir/rationality, laid the foundation for the creation of a biocentric form of the human. While the ratiocentric form of the human relied on ir/rationality, the biocentric statement of the human narrates the human as a result of by-Evolution difference,³⁸ a narration embedded in the development of biological sciences. In the biocentric form of the human, in the narration of the human in purely biologized terms, it was “people of Black Africa” who were rendered into the embodied form of by-Evolution inferiority.³⁹

³² Wynter 2003, 275.

³³ Maldonado-Torres 2007, 246.

³⁴ Pagán 2020, 10.

³⁵ Maldonado-Torres 2007.

³⁶ Wynter 2003, 266.

³⁷ Wynter 2015, 187.

³⁸ Wynter 2015, 187.

³⁹ Wynter 2003, 266.

The skepticism about belonging to the human has been, in my understanding, extended from the colonized people to all those who do not correspond to the biocentric form of the human. Alexander Weheliye pursues this thought in his reflections on the inclusion of a privileged minority in the human which can only happen at the expense of what he describes as the newly criminalized and disposable populations.⁴⁰ The transformation of the ratio- into the biocentric form of the human stand in a continuum: co-human negation is inherent in both of them.⁴¹ This co-human negation is organized around racial formations; racial formations have been invented and made productive as an ordering category that delineates the human from the human other, the not-quite-human, the nonhuman.⁴²

Understanding that the line delineating the human from the human other has been in constant transformation and been adapted to spatiotemporal conditions, aligns with the conceptualization of race as a formation that assumes multiple meanings and expresses the interests of dominant social conditions.⁴³ Racial formations can thus not be defined in isolation from transforming social conditions. Thinking along these lines, racial formations have, in the time of their creation, expressed the interests of imperial expansion and colonialism. In other words, race has been created to shape the line delineating the human from the human other according to colonialism's interests and relations of domination. These relations of domination have outdated formal colonial domination, as the concept of coloniality suggests. This means, that contemporary racial formations are enmeshed with these relations of domination and are upholding them, thus, racial formations are structured around the line delineating the human from the human other – continuing, upholding, transforming, shaping and shaped through this line.

1.2. RE/DRAWING THE ONTOLOGICAL COLONIAL LINE IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPE

The genesis of the human from a decolonial perspective enables on the one hand to recognize that racial formations are inherently linked to the delineation of the human from the human other. On the other hand, it allows us to understand that the mechanisms that delineate the human from the human other are still operative, as “long-standing patterns of power that emerge[d] as a result of colonialism”⁴⁴ have outlived the colonial administration and continue to persist. Contemporary European racial formations, then, cannot be understood in isolation from transforming processes

⁴⁰ Weheliye 2014, 81.

⁴¹ Wynter 2015, 188.

⁴² Wynter 2003, 288

⁴³ Goldberg 1992, 544.

⁴⁴ Maldonado-Torres 2007, 243.

of humanization and dehumanization. Considering these temporal continuities is crucial for a nuanced account of racial formations, but a historical perspective alone does not suffice to discuss current forms of racial formations: The spatial continuities and multiplicities must also be considered.

Therefore, I use the concept of racial regionalization: This concept tries to capture and theorize the spatial continuities and multiplicities of racial formations. Racial regionalization is rooted in the concept of critical regionalism, a methodological framework to account for “the commonalities and divergences across regions regarding the historical force of race, and the resistances to racially driven exclusions, debilitations and humiliations.”⁴⁵ This regional approach “undermines the narrow hold of national determination on racial definition and power, encouraging their critical analysis in the play of relations between the here and its interactive elsewhere.”⁴⁶ It is thus rather an interrelated than a mere comparative approach. How the human is delineated from the human other transforms not only over time but also over space, the meaning that is ascribed to these racial formations is contextual, and how it is (non)verbalized is not the same in one place or another. However, as the concept of racial regionalization proposes, the multiple processes of delineation and ascription of meaning cannot be understood as apart from each other, as taking place in a vacuum, but in constant circulation, relating to each other, differentiating from each other, influencing each other over time and space.

In the following, I want to think about contemporary European racial formations in their spatial and temporal particularities. I therefore outline discussions of racial formations in contemporary Europe and think them together. On the one hand I aim at getting a sense of the colonial continuities and the temporal and spatial particularities of racial formations in Europe. On the other hand, I hope to outline the forms the line delineating the human from the human other takes in Europe, what mechanism re/draw this line, and what relations of domination are upheld through this line. With this, I want to build a foundation for later elaborating how these racial formations are entangled with the bordering practice of deportation and the creation of deportabilities.

1.2.1. RACIAL FORMATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPE

Racial formations assume a particular form in Europe, permeated of continuities of European imperialism and colonialism, but also transformed and framed, if not concealed, in other rationales. Following the notion that racial formations articulate the interests of dominant social relations,⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Goldberg 2009b, 370.

⁴⁶ Goldberg 2009b, 370.

⁴⁷ Goldberg 1992, 544.

Goldberg conceptualizes race in contemporary Europa as a “foundational code” that serves to “effect and rationalize” relations of domination.⁴⁸ Similar to the decolonial genesis of the human, Goldberg historicizes this foundational code in the European context. While Wynter was interested in the patterns of thought that were preceding the emergence of racial formations, Goldberg centers their transformation after the formal end of colonialism. In line with the concept of the ontological colonial difference, he describes racial formations as an invisible border line along which those who belong are differentiated from those who do not belong.⁴⁹ This border line, however, is not stable, it transforms over time and space. But what remains, and here one recognizes the genesis of the human put forward in decolonial theories, is that this line delineates the human from the human other. “Human being is delineated in contrast to, in repulsion from, the creaturely or beastly that is taken always as a threat to ‘us’, to our well-being.”⁵⁰ Racial formations are thus a matter of naturalizing the belonging to the human.

One form racial formations have taken, according to Goldberg, is racial naturalism. This term refers to the ideology of the natural inferiority of some populations.⁵¹ Racial naturalism, then, describes what Wynter terms the biocentric statement of the human, which narrates the human as a result of by-Evolution difference.⁵² Another form of racial formation that has evolved from but not replaced racial naturalism, is racial historicism. This concept denotes the reference not to biological inferiority but to historical immaturity as a means of racial hierarchization.⁵³ Racial historicism has been adopted in the mid-twentieth century and has become dominant throughout this century.⁵⁴ This form of delineating the human from the human other is more ambiguous, coded through terms such as progress and emancipation,⁵⁵ but it reinscribes the same ontological colonial difference as racial naturalism does. By the end of the twentieth century, racial historicism had morphed into another form of racial formation, in which race is no longer uttered.⁵⁶ But even if racial formations are disguised with new terms, they are still rooted in and maintaining the ontological colonial difference. If one assumes that this ontological colonial line expresses the interests of relations of domination and is thus productive for their maintenance, it becomes all the more clear that not seeing, not uttering race, does not challenge the relations of domination that racial formations are entrenched in. Rather, these relations of domination might become even harder to address and challenge. In the words of Goldberg, contemporary Europe is in an age of

⁴⁸ Goldberg 2009b, 4 in: Maldonado-Torres 2010, 79.

⁴⁹ Goldberg 2006, 349.

⁵⁰ Goldberg 2006, 348.

⁵¹ Goldberg 2009b, 18.

⁵² Wynter 2015, 187.

⁵³ Goldberg 2009b, 17.

⁵⁴ Goldberg 2009b, 5.

⁵⁵ Goldberg 2002, 79.

⁵⁶ Maldonado-Torres 2010, 81.

race in denial, of racisms without racists, of racisms without racism.⁵⁷ But racial formations do live on. As Goldberg puts it, they live on in a fundamental contradiction: While racial formations are no longer apparent to be a foundational code effecting and rationalizing relations of domination, this code persists rationalizing social conditions. Thus, racial formations are “more hidden and denied today than probably at any other time since its emergence” – race is buried alive.⁵⁸

In the context of the UK, Stuart Hall refers to the omission of the prevalence of racial formations as colonial amnesia. The concept of colonial amnesia builds on the understanding of colonialism as a historical moment that is external to Europe, that is a matter of the settlers alone.⁵⁹ Thus, colonial amnesia refers to the active forgetting of the European responsibilities for colonialism and thus its continuities and entanglement in contemporary relations of domination.⁶⁰ This forgetting also applies to the central role of racial formations in contemporary European societies; race becomes hidden. The idea of race being hidden, being buried alive, is also reflected in the work of Fatima El-Tayeb. In her book *European Others. Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe* (2011) she describes the “invisible unspeakable presence of race [in Europe], the myriad ways in which it makes itself felt from day-to-day interactions to transcontinental political structures, while simultaneously being deemed nonexistent within European thought.”⁶¹ In order to further deepen the understanding of the particular presence of race, she mobilizes the concept of haunting, that has been coined by Avery Gordon. Through haunting, “we are notified that what’s been concealed is very much alive and present, interfering precisely with those always incomplete forms of containment and repression ceaselessly directed toward us.”⁶² It is about “abusive systems of power [making] themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life, especially when they are supposedly over and done with.”⁶³

Thinking along these lines, racial formations make themselves known and have far-fetching consequences – not although race is concealed, but precisely *because* it is concealed, an observation that is echoed in El-Tayeb’s demonstration of the construction of race as something external to Europe as inherent in European racisms. The externalization of race occurs on multiple levels. On the one hand, race is considered to be external to European thinking. Europe is imagined as a colorblind continent, disregarding both Europa’s fundamental role in the creation of race and

⁵⁷ Maldonado-Torres 2010, 81.

⁵⁸ Maldonado-Torres 2010, 78.

⁵⁹ Goldberg 2006, 337.

⁶⁰ Purtschert 2019, 31.

⁶¹ El-Tayeb 2011, xviii.

⁶² Gordon 2008, xvi.

⁶³ Gordon 2008, xvi

racisms that shaped and are still shaping contemporary Europe.⁶⁴ On the other hand, racialized populations are externalized, presented as the European other. El-Tayeb points out that race becomes a marker of non-belonging without ever mentioning race.⁶⁵ Belonging to Europe and to the “glaring whiteness underlying Europe’s self-image”⁶⁶ is thus negotiated through the concept of race. Glaring whiteness is also central to the concept of racial Europeanization. Racial Europeanization, part of Goldberg’s conceptualization of racial regionalization, captures the particularities of racial formations in Europe. Goldberg states that racial Europeanization produces the European as white and Christian, it produces “Europe as the home of, and so to, whiteness and Christianity.”⁶⁷ The equation of Europe, Europeans and whiteness is further theorized through the concept of white innocence. This concept has been developed in the monograph *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race* of Gloria Wekker in relation to the Netherlands. Considering the insights of Goldberg and El-Tayeb, the concept white innocence might also be applied to other European states and regional contexts. White innocence denotes the equation of whiteness with Europe. It describes that whiteness is not recognized as a particular position in a racial order, and that whiteness is rendered into an unmarked norm in contemporary European societies. The innocence is also based on the denial of racisms through the construction of racisms being external to Europe,⁶⁸ a construction similar to the glaring whiteness that El-Tayeb theorized as being underlying contemporary Europe.

Racial formations as shaping and being shaped in and through relations of domination are not acknowledged in the dominant European discourse. Still, racial formations are structuring contemporary Europe and its notions of belonging. Racial formations thus are both a means and an expression of the non/belonging to Europe and the non/belonging to the human. Thinking these two perspectives together, I want to understand racial formations in contemporary Europe to be about the difference between the European human and the non-European human other. In the dominant European discourse, the European conflates with being human, the non-European with the human other.

1.2.2. RACIALIZATION IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPE

With race, the processes of racialization have also been buried alive. Just like race, the mechanisms that delineate the human from the human other become unspeakable.⁶⁹ I do not mean to suggest

⁶⁴ El-Tayeb 2011, xvi.

⁶⁵ El-Tayeb 2011, xxvi.

⁶⁶ El-Tayeb 2011, xxv.

⁶⁷ Goldberg 2006, 352.

⁶⁸ Wekker 2016, 2.

⁶⁹ Goldberg 2006.

that the consequences of the working of racial formations would be absent if race was utterable. However, and I believe Goldberg and El-Tayeb to argue along similar lines; the fact that racial formations are concealed enables racisms to run rampant without being named and thus addressed as such. Thinking along this line one can recognize that there is a need to consider deportations and deportabilities in their entanglement with racial formations, and to understand the role of deportations and deportabilities for the construction and maintenance of the European human and the non-European human other. Thus, a discussion of racialization has to take place.

In this thesis, I use the term racialization to denote the processes behind the construction of and the distinction between the European human and the non-European human other, but also to denote other regional forms of demarcating the human from the human other. In order to have a more tangible working definition of racialization, I complement it with the definition of the critical border scholar Nicholas De Genova in a publication on border regimes and race, in which he defines racialization as “the dynamic processes by which the meanings and distinctions attributed to ‘race’ come to be *produced* and continually reproduced, and more importantly, are always entangled in social relations and conflicts, and thus retain an enduring significance because their specific forms and substantive meanings are eminently historical and mutable.”⁷⁰ I thus understand racialization as the dynamic process of producing and delineating the human from the human other, but also a process of ascribing meaning to the human and to the human other.

This process is not universal, as the historicization of multiple racial formations as well as the concept of racial regionalization suggest. Racialization thus refers to the process of delineating the human from the human other and of ascribing meaning to the ontological colonial line and the constructs of the human and the human other it creates – embedded in their specific spatial and temporal context. To examine the process of delineation, one must explore how the distinction between the human and the human other is made and which narratives are mobilized. It is also necessary to examine the contexts in which racialized and racializing narratives are mobilized as well as the mechanisms that reinscribe or challenge these narratives. I want to take this understanding of the multiple, interrelated but distinct processes of delineating the European human from the non-European human other as a starting point for the examination of the entrenchment of race, racialization, deportation and deportabilities. The question that arises with this is how deportations and deportabilities are bordering practices in and through which both the human and the human other is delineated and meaning ascribed to it. Thus, I intend to examine the extent to which deportations and deportabilities are not alone racialized, but also racializing.

⁷⁰ De Genova 2005, 2.

CHAPTER 2

DEPORTATION, DEPORTABILITIES AND RACIAL FORMATIONS

Racial formations are interconnected with state borders and bordering practices. In this chapter, I outline this entanglement in the context of the European border regime. European bordering practices, as this chapter demonstrates, are a means of maintaining not alone administrative borders but also of the ontological colonial line that is interwoven in administrative borders. Therewith, also the bordering practice of deportation is about maintaining and reinstating both administrative and ontological borders.

In order to understand the entanglement of deportations and racial formations, it is not sufficient to consider just the actual deportation, the moment of the forced crossing of administrative borders. More revealing is an approach that also includes the prospects of deportation that go beyond the moment of actual deportation: deportabilities. With the concept of deportability the condition of being liable to deportation is theorized. This concept allows us to recognize how the bordering practice of deportation is not only entangled with racial formations at the moment of actual deportation but also in the condition of being liable to deportation. This entanglement, as I will argue, does not only affect those liable to deportation but transforms and reshapes racial formations – thus, the examination of deportations and deportabilities is not about this specific bordering practice alone but about relations of domination in a broader sense.

In this chapter, I elaborate these interconnections on a theoretical level. In order to lay the foundation for such a discussion, the chapter begins with an outline of some of the existing literature on the entanglement of borders and race. Thereafter, I attempt to understand how bordering practices are intertwined with racial formations. Eventually, the bordering practice of deportation and the resulting conditions of being liable to deportation are outlined in their entanglement with racial formations. Therefore, a brief outline of the European bordering practice of deportation will be offered, since racial formations cannot be understood in isolation from the particular conditions, in this case the condition of deportations and deportabilities. In a second step, a short introduction to the concept of deportability is provided to then connect the production of deportability to racial formations. Introducing the entanglement of racial formations, borders and the bordering practice of deportation on a rather theoretical level will establish an analytical framework for the later discussion of the entanglement of deportation, deportabilities, racial formations in specific sites of deportations and deportabilities.

2.1. BORDERS AND RACIAL FORMATIONS

In dominant discourses, the connection of racial formations in and for borders is denied. Racial formations become an absent-presence within borders,⁷¹ an insight that aligns with theorizations of racial formations in contemporary Europe, which argue that operations of racial formations are not recognized as such. However, borders are never neutral. They are an integral part of colonial modernity and uphold the relations of domination that underlie colonial modernity. Thus, borders are entangled with racial formations that effect and rationalize these relations of domination.

According to the decolonial theorist Anibal Quijano, the identities created by the myth of racial formations were associated with geohistorical sites.⁷² In relation to racial formations in contemporary Europe, this association is reflected: Racial formations are constructed as something external to Europe. Racial formations and racialized populations are not recognized as part of Europe but are instead constructed as the European other. In this contemporary self-image, Europe is white, the home of and for whiteness.⁷³ This association of racial formations and geohistorical sites is further theorized through the idea that borders function as a global color line.⁷⁴ The notion of the color line was coined by W.E.B. Du Bois in his famous phrase “[t]he problem of the Twentieth century is the problem of the color-line,”⁷⁵ denoting a global system of exploitation. The color line thus separates the “free from the unfree, the owners from the dispossessed, discerning who belongs and who does not belong within the nation-state or within humanity itself.”⁷⁶ The concept of the color-line, once referring to the racial segregation in the Americas, has soon been applied to the global dimension and become a fruitful concept for conceptualizing borders in their (neo)colonial continuities. The idea that borders function as global color lines implies that nation-state borders reinscribe on a global scale the delineation of the free from the unfree, of those belonging to the nation state and humanity from those who do not belong. In this conceptualization of borders, the notion of race as delineating the human from the human other is reflected.

To explore this thinking about borders as a global color line further, it is useful to consider the conceptualization of the border as an abyssal line. This conceptualization traces back to the sociologist Bonaventura de Sousa Santos, who introduced this notion to examine the operations of coloniality. De Sousa Santos frames the operations of coloniality as enactments “of abyssal lines,

⁷¹ M'Charek, Schramm, and Skinner 2014, 471.

⁷² Quijano 2000, 536.

⁷³ Goldberg 2006, 352.

⁷⁴ De Genova 2018b.

⁷⁵ Du Bois 1903, 3.

⁷⁶ Jung n.d.

which are constituted of a system of visible and invisible distinctions.”⁷⁷ Based on this understanding of operations of coloniality, the decolonial scholar Everisto Benyera thinks of borders as an abyssal line delineating the zone of being from the zone of non-being.⁷⁸ These zones are not to be understood as territorial zones alone but as defining the position in the relations of domination: the zone of being is associated with the white human. The zone of non-being, “the invented world that was the source of slaves and victims of imperialism, colonialism, and apartheid,”⁷⁹ is associated with the racialized human other, the racialized non-being. Thus, borders are multi-layered, consisting of both administrative and ontological lines delineating the human from the human other.

These borders can consist of material markers up to militarized border infrastructures, as it can be seen in an increasing scale at the European external borders. These borders, however, are far more complex than their material manifestations. Borders are more than about the geographical maintenance of the global color line. Borders function also as a “machine of inclusion”⁸⁰ as Gargi Bhattacharyya puts it, since the global color line is inscribed into bodies. “As the illegal or undocumented immigrants try to fit into the zone of being, the “border” pursues them, as it refuses to be left at the physical border,”⁸¹ “racialized, postcolonial illegalized labor subordination”⁸² is created. The belonging and non-belonging to a nation, to the human, is thus inscribed into bodies: belonging is embodied.⁸³ Thus, the administrative border is but the visible part of a border that is concomitant with intangible borders such as the ontological colonial line.⁸⁴ In the following, I outline bordering practices as a means to uphold more than just material borders: as a means of maintaining the border in its multi-layered constitution, both maintaining the ontological colonial line and inscribing the ontological colonial line into bodies. Thus, I intend to establish an understanding of bordering practices as a machine of exclusion and a “machine of inclusion.”⁸⁵

2.2. BORDERING AND RACIAL FORMATIONS

Understanding borders as more than just an administrative line enables us to recognize that bordering practices go beyond the maintenance of the administrative border. Unraveling the multi-layered constitution of borders in a postcolonial world order thus discloses that the control of cross-border mobilities is also about the maintenance of the ontological colonial border. Moreover,

⁷⁷ de Sousa Santos 2007, 45.

⁷⁸ Benyera 2019, 15.

⁷⁹ Ndlovu-Gathseni 2015, 490.

⁸⁰ Bhattacharyya 2018, 73.

⁸¹ Benyera 2019, 15.

⁸² De Genova 2018b.

⁸³ Bhattacharyya 2018, 73.

⁸⁴ De Sousa Santos 2007, 45.

⁸⁵ Bhattacharyya 2018, 73.

the multifacetedness of borders illustrates that the circumvention of control and the crossing of the administrative border is not tantamount to the crossing of the ontological colonial line. Borders stick to bodies, they cannot “be left at the [administrative] border.”⁸⁶ Against this backdrop it seems undeniable that the control of material borders is related to the control of ontological boundaries. However, *how* the control of material boundaries is linked to the control of ontological boundaries needs to be carefully elucidated.

Benyera, having conceptualized the multi-layered border, is not clear on the *how*. All he states on the *how* is that the ontological border underlies the material border. The control of material borders is thus shaped by the ontological colonial line. I want to argue that the ontological border is in a more complex, reciprocal relationship with the material border. Thus, also the control of the material border is in a complex relationship to the continuation and control of the ontological border. One aspect that makes me think this is, since there is no congruence between the control of the material line and the ontological line, the ontological border cannot be hermetically secured through the securing of administrative borders. The crossing of the ontological border cannot be prevented by physical means. But is this really true? Is the ontological colonial line not all too often maintained with terrifying violence? This brings us to another aspect that makes me think that the ontological border is in a more complex and reciprocal relationship with the material border: To what extent is the control of the material border shaped by the violent maintenance of the ontological border, or is the control of the material border itself a mechanism that contributes to securing the ontological colonial line? Thus the question arises, to what extent the control of the administrative borders also maintains the ontological colonial line.

To put it in other words: The control of administrative borders is not about maintaining the territorial distinction between zones of being and zones of non-being alone. It is also about maintaining the ontological distinction. This means that border control, controlling the access to the zone of being is structured along the ontological colonial line. Thus, those who cross both the administrative border as well as the ontological colonial line, do not gain full access to the zone of being, as the ontological colonial line is inscribed into their bodies and turns them into the human other. Bordering practices, as I intend to demonstrate, are also reinscribing and redrawing this line through the mobilization and transformations of meanings ascribed to the human and the human other. The process of redrawing the line between the human and the human other, however, is complex. For the ontological border is not a single, inalterable border. This border transforms, varies in spatial and temporal dimensions and is “characterized by a multiplication of hierarchies

⁸⁶ Benyera 2019, 15.

and racialized differences.”⁸⁷ Administrative borders are a means of producing and shaping these hierarchies and racialized differences.⁸⁸ The extent to which the control of mobilities crossing administrative borders not only maintains ontological differences, but also shapes them, will be examined and demonstrated through an exemplary study of deportation in Switzerland, the Central Mediterranean and Algeria.

2.3. DEPORTATION AS EUROPEAN BORDERING PRACTICE

Deportations are considered a bordering practice, that, as I want to explore in this thesis, is entangled with racial formations. The emergence and transformation of this bordering practice date back to the time before the formation of nation-states. The historicization would enable important insights to the understanding of the entanglement of deportation, deportabilities and racial formations, however, it is beyond the scope of this thesis. To establish an understanding of deportations, I outline some fundamental moments in the transformation of European deportations practices since the foundation of the European Union, more precise, since the Schengen agreements in 1985.

The signing of the Schengen agreements is an important moment in the transformation of European deportation practices. The Schengen agreements led to less control of internal borders for those considered belonging to white Europe,⁸⁹ not including the borders to Ireland, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria and Cyprus. Meanwhile, through additional agreements, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland have also become part of the Schengen area.⁹⁰ The decrease of the control of internal borders was accompanied by an increase in the control of the Schengen area’s external borders. In addition to the introduction of border controls and the expansion of the border infrastructure at the external borders, the deportation of people illegalized through migration and asylum laws became a central instrument of migration control. In the early 1990s, the first attempt was made to develop a uniform deportation practice.⁹¹ Since then, the European Union and “European nation-states have developed extensive sets of laws, policies, norms, and practices and institutions concerned with regulating deportations, which are seen as a key part of contemporary migration policies.”⁹²

⁸⁷ Tazzioli 2021, 108.

⁸⁸ Tazzioli 2021, 109.

⁸⁹ For a nuanced account of the racial character of border control inside the Schengen area, the paper of M’charek, Schramm, and Skinner 2014 is of great interest.

⁹⁰ Garner 2007, 64.

⁹¹ Coleman 2009, 11.

⁹² Jones, Kilpatrick, and Gkliati 2020, 1.

A central component of the regulation of deportations are readmission agreements.⁹³ Besides the intra-European deportations of non-European citizens within the framework of the Dublin Conventions,⁹⁴ the agreements with third countries are supposed to regulate and facilitate the deportation across the European external border. These agreements are concluded between individual European member states but also the European Union as a community of states and so-called countries of origin. Furthermore, the agreements are also concluded with so-called safe third countries. The general aim of the safe third country policy “is to enable the rejection of protection seekers, who have either already found protection in a third country, or who have travelled through a third country where it would have reasonably been possible to seek protection.”⁹⁵ As the classification of Turkey as a safe third country⁹⁶ and numerous other examples suggest, the decision as to which countries are classified as safe third countries is guided more by the political interests of European member states and the European Union than by any interest in the safety of deported people. These so-called safe country policies enable deportations to countries where deported people have no social network and are sometimes exposed to violence and the risk of further deportation: Turkey can also be cited as an example in this respect. According to Coleman, these further deportations are no coincidence: “It comes as no surprise that the negotiation of Community readmission agreements has triggered neighboring third countries to initiate or intensify their own readmission policies.”⁹⁷ Thus, “transnational corridors of expulsions”⁹⁸ are created, through which people are deported across multiple borders. The notion of corridors seems to me a bit misleading, which is why I propose the image of a transnational net. With the negotiation of more and more readmission agreements and the more rigorous control of European external borders, which extends far beyond geographical Europe, countries outside Europe adopt or reinforce already existing deportation practices, as is the case in Algeria: A transnational net of deportation practices and deportations is emerging. It can thus be stated that European bordering and deportation practices exert pressure on non-European states to take up or reinforce deportation practices.

Deportations are often considered as a legal expression of national sovereignties. However, legal frameworks alone do not suffice to understand deportations. Deportations, which I define as forcing border crossings in an unintended direction in the context of migration, are not alone conducted within a legal framework. Deportations outside legal frameworks are not an aberration

⁹³ Cassarino 2010.

⁹⁴ M'Charek, Schramm, and Skinner 2014, 475.

⁹⁵ Coleman 2009, 18.

⁹⁶ Elitok 2019, 7.

⁹⁷ Coleman 2009, 65.

⁹⁸ Nyers 2010, 1070.

or isolated cases of non-compliance with legal frameworks. Rather, these deportations outside legal frameworks are an integral part of the European deportation power. This becomes apparent considering the systematic pushbacks at the internal and external borders of the European Union. Pushbacks are defined as forcing migrants “[...] back over borders without being afforded the opportunity to apply for asylum. Within this, individual circumstances are not considered, there is no option to challenge the expulsion, and violent methods are employed that can constitute torture.”⁹⁹ Pushbacks, thus, are illegal bordering practices as these practices conflict with international and, in many cases, national law, and often result in serious human rights violations.

Pushbacks are not a new phenomenon in the history of European bordering practices. It has been part of European bordering practices at the external borders for many years, as Lena Karamanidou states in an interview: “People who did their military service at the Greek-Turkish border have talked of systematic practices of pushbacks dating back to the late 1980s.”¹⁰⁰ However, systematic documentation and reporting on pushbacks did not take place until the late 2000s, and the increase in media attention in recent years might convey the impression that this practice is a recent development. Pushbacks at the European external borders are practiced by European actors, as is the case on the land border between Greece and Turkey. Also, in the Central Mediterranean did pushbacks start in 2009, as it will be elaborated on later on. These pushbacks and pullbacks are often accompanied by rampant violence. Deportations outside the legal framework also occur in Algeria, where the agreement between the Algerian and the Nigerien governments on the readmission of Nigerien nationals is used as a framework for the deportation of persons to Niger, regardless of their citizenship. The deportations are thus taking place outside the legal framework, yet it is a practice that is being carried out on an inconceivable scale. At irregular intervals, hundreds of people are deported to Niger illegally and with the use of violence.

Even though legalized forms of deportation also involve violence, the excess of violence in pushbacks should not be minimized through an analytical failure to differentiate legalized forms of deportation from legal forms. Still, I consider the inclusion of pushbacks in my definition of deportations to be fruitful in that it shows that deportations cannot be understood as an expression of state power alone, but that other approaches must be developed to understand deportations. The approach I take is one that aims to elaborate on the extent to which deportations are an expression of racial formations, but also an instrument to reinscribe and reshape racial formations and the relations of domination that racial formations are enmeshed in.

⁹⁹ Border Violence Monitoring Network 2020, 8.

¹⁰⁰ Karamanidou in: *Mare Liberum* 2022, 27.

2.4. DEPORTATION AND RACIAL FORMATIONS

The conclusion of readmission agreements between European member states, European states, the European Union and third countries and the extensive set of measures, legal or illegal, that the European Union has developed in the last decades, but also the practice of deportation itself, are in the dominant European narrative often understood as an inevitable expression of the state's sovereignty and its obligation to protect its borders. In this narrative, deportations are a means applied by a European member state or the European Union to protect its administrative borders. The conceptualization of borders that underlies this dominant understanding of deportations is shaped by the presence-absence of race.¹⁰¹ This presence-absence should be refuted by now: Accordingly, deportations are not untouched by racial formations as well and thus go beyond the control of administrative borders. Therefore, legal frameworks such as readmission agreements cannot be considered in isolation from relations of domination to understand deportations. Rather, one has to consider legal frameworks in their entanglement with relations of domination, as it has been theorized in multiple ways and with multiple foci.¹⁰²

The insights, that state practices are embedded in relations of domination, and that deportations are conducted within as well as outside legal frameworks, call for a reconceptualization of deportations as a bordering practice. The reconceptualization that I intend to undertake in this thesis builds on the understanding of borders being both administrative and ontological. Deportations as part of the European border regime no longer appear as a natural result of the European Union's and member state's obligation to protect their territorial borders. Deportations are linked to the ontological border that is intertwined with administrative borders. Deportations seem to be a consequence of the territorial division into the zone of being and the zone of non-being. Crossing the territorial line between the zone of being and the zone of non-being is met with deportation to maintain this territorial distinction, as the zone of being and non-being is not only territorial but also associated with bodies and inscribed in them. The association of racialized populations to the zone of non-being is thus the basis on which people are deported. Thus, deportations might be understood as a practice applied when someone's or a group's crossing of the administrative border destabilizes the ontological border too much: With deportation as a means to maintain the administrative border, the ontological line is also protected and reinscribed, and the alignment of administrative and ontological borders is maintained.

¹⁰¹ M'Charek, Schramm, and Skinner 2014, 471.

¹⁰² See Foucault 1977 on biopolitics; Mbembe 2019 on necropolitics; Spade 2011 on population management.

Thus, deportations are based on the ontological colonial line. This line, however, is not stable. The line that is delineating the human from the human other has transformed in time and adapted to the historical specificities, altering the territorial sites that are deemed zones of being and zones of non-being. Such an alteration can be noted when considering the transforming racial position of Southern European immigrants in the United States,¹⁰³ or when thinking the Irish history from a perspective of racialization.¹⁰⁴ Although these historiographies and their implicit conceptualizations of race are not uncontroversial, it does show that the ontological line is neither clear nor consistent. The ontological line also transforms through space, it is not a line that is the same in all regional contexts. The one associated to the zone of non-being differs, as one can see thinking of the different shapes of racism in different contexts, such as in Western Europe and the Maghreb. These regional differences of the line that demarcates the being from the non-being are the reason for Goldberg to conceptualize racial regionalism. Racial regionalism enables us to recognize that there is no universal conceptualization of racial formations and thus no universal conceptualization of the demarcating line between the human and the human other. There are multiple racial formations and the demarcating line is further characterized by multiplicities and hierarchies,¹⁰⁵ as the racial line intersects with other social classifications, creating a complex system of delineating the human from the human. The multiplicities and hierarchies within, and the regional and temporal differences between ontological borders suggest that the administrative border cannot coincide with the ontological border, and therewith it is not possible to claim deportations lead to a perfect alignment of administrative and ontological borders. Rather, deportation practices are in an intricate relation with racial formations, based on, reinstating, but also reshaping these formations.

2.5. DEPORTABILITIES AND RACIAL FORMATIONS

Based on the understanding that deportation practices and racial formations are in such a complicated and co-constitutive relation, one can already assume that not all those who have crossed the ontological colonial border by crossing of the administrative one will be deported: This corresponds to the realities of deportation practice. In order to fathom these realities and to understand the entanglement of deportation and the multiplicities and hierarchies inherent in the ontological colonial border, I suggest the application of the concept of deportability.

The concept of deportability reveals that deportations are not a means of maintaining ontological borders in the actual enactment of a deportation alone. Deportations are a means of maintaining

¹⁰³ See Guglielmo and Salerno 2003; Jacobson 1999.

¹⁰⁴ See Peatling 2005.

¹⁰⁵ Tazzioli 2021, 108.

ontological boundaries even when deportations are not carried out but remain a constant threat. The concept draws attention to the fact that “the prospect of deportation [goes] beyond the actual fact of deportation.”¹⁰⁶ Deportability denotes a condition that is being created through deportation, it denotes “the state of being liable to deportation,”¹⁰⁷ “the likelihood of being deported.”¹⁰⁸ The deportation of some leaves more people in constant danger to be deported.¹⁰⁹ This concept was developed to illuminate deportations, in particular the prospects of deportation, from an economic perspective. The situation of imminent deportation can be understood from this perspective as a means for the formation of disposable migrant labor.¹¹⁰ Thus, the condition of deportability is an “economic strategy of the neoliberal state, which requires the presence of noncitizen and undocumented labor.”¹¹¹ Deportability is thus also connected to illegalization,¹¹² since illegalization means that there is no possibility to turn to institutional legal protection.

I want to add another perspective to this economic understanding of deportability. Thinking of the entanglement of racial formations and deportations, I consider deportability from a racial formations perspective. This enables to recognize that the multiplicities and hierarchies that are inherent in the ontological colonial border are also shaping the condition of being deportable. Thus a refinement of the concept of deportability is undertaken: I consider it to be more fruitful to consider deportabilities in the plural form. Deportabilities in the plural indicate, that the realities and conditions that emerge from the threat of deportation are multiple and structured along racial lines. This becomes apparent when connecting the thought of El-Tayeb, that racialized populations are externalized in contemporary Europe, with the concept of deportabilities: Not all who cross the European borders are understood as external to white Europe and thus not all crossings of the administrative borders are also considered to be crossing the ontological colonial border. The threat of being deportable thus changes, those bodies considered to be belonging are not in the same, immanent threat of being arrested and deported as those bodies external to white Europe. But when the ontological colonial border, as Benyera writes, refuses “to be left at the [administrative] border,”¹¹³ the condition of being deportable becomes more immanent.

To summarize: From an economic perspective, deportations are thus a mechanism contributing to the process of delineating the human from the human other in order to create a situation in that

¹⁰⁶ De Genova 2018a, 14.

¹⁰⁷ De Genova 2018a, 14.

¹⁰⁸ Paoletti 2010, 3.

¹⁰⁹ De Genova 2005, 8.

¹¹⁰ De Genova 2010, 9.

¹¹¹ Maira 2010, 301.

¹¹² I deliberately use the term illegalization and not terms like irregularity or being undocumented. In my opinion, these terms conceal the fact that the existence of people is de facto illegalized.

¹¹³ Benyera 2019, 15.

the human other is exploitable. Thinking from a racial formations perspective, the meaning of deportations takes on another aspect: The condition of the human other is created along racial lines, thus, the social positions are created along this line, based on the condition of being liable to deportation. Deportations and deportabilities become a means to uphold the idea of Europe as the home of and for whiteness and to ascribe meaning to the European human and the non-European human other through the creation of deportabilities and the conditions of economic exploitation that emerge from this condition. In the rationale of race and racialization being buried alive, these conditions are naturalized, the human other condition is inscribed into bodies. Thus, an attribution of meaning to the ontological colonial line, and the constructs of the human and the human other it creates, occurs, not alone effecting those liable to deportation but all: The racial formations are associated with new meaning that, however, is not universal but transforms in time and space.

Deportabilities are thus an inherent part of deportation practice, rooting in the ontological colonial line in its multiplicities and hierarchies, but also reshaping this line, attributing it with new meaning, and thus reinstating or transforming racial formations. This multifaceted entanglement of deportations, deportabilities and racial formations, is about to be explored in the following chapters. I want to draw upon the outlined conceptualizations of deportations and deportabilities as a tool to understand this entanglement in three different sites of deportations: Switzerland, the Central Mediterranean and Algeria. These sites of deportations differ in historical and regional terms with regard to the entanglement of deportations, deportabilities and racial formations. However, these different forms of entanglements intersect. To recognize their intersection enables to better understand their relation to relations of domination and their further interconnection and interaction through the European politics of externalizing migration control.

CHAPTER 3

DEPORTATION, DEPORTABILITIES AND RACIAL FORMATIONS IN SWITZERLAND

Deportations and deportabilities are entangled with racial formations. This bordering practice is rooted in racial formations that can be traced to European imperialism and colonialism and the concomitant relations of domination that persist until this time, it is structured through the ontological colonial line delineating the human from the human other. The bordering practice of deportation and the deportabilities inherent in this practice are not only rooted in racial formations. It is also a mechanism to reinscribe racial formations and their role in the maintenance of the relations of domination that are built upon racial classifications, but also a means to attribute meaning to and thus reshape racial formations.

Thinking along the lines of racial regionalization and the colonial continuities inscribed into racial formations, the spatiotemporal conditions of racial formations are crucial for an understanding of the entanglement of racial formations with deportations and deportabilities: Not alone racial formations, but also deportations and deportabilities are embedded in relations of domination and particular spatiotemporal conditions. Therefore, in a first example, I address the deportation practice in a specific spatiotemporal condition: contemporary Switzerland. In order to trace this entanglement, I discuss racial formations in contemporary Switzerland, starting with an outline of colonial Switzerland and the omission of these histories that are inherent in the white innocence that structures the country's self-conception. Contemporary Switzerland, I argue, is shaped through the same externalization of the racialized other as in the dominant conceptualization of Europe – perhaps even exacerbated by the white innocence shaping dominant Swiss self-representation. Nonetheless, it will become apparent, racial formations operate in Switzerland as a social classification to delineate the human from the human other.

In a second step, I want to discuss to what extent deportations are based on racial formations, in other words, to what extent deportations are based on the line delineating the human from the human other – and thus on the basis of the externalization of racialized populations inherent in the Swiss self-perception. Furthermore, I intend to examine deportations not only as rooted in European racial formations, but also as reinstating and reshaping these formations. In order to better understand the entanglement between racial formations and deportations, I want to take a closer look at the “Ausschaffungsinitiative,” a popular initiative “for the deportation of criminal

foreigners (deportation initiative)” in 2010.¹¹⁴ In the terms of the feminist and critical race scholar Stefanie Boulila, the “country’s direct democratic system relentlessly allow[ed] for race to be mobilized.”¹¹⁵ Thus, the colonial imaginaries¹¹⁶ that are rooted in omitted colonial histories, and structure the construction of the European other until today, underlie and are reproduced through this initiative. However, this popular initiative mobilized not alone the figure of the European other but also European white innocence.

Furthermore, I intend to link this initiative to a practice that is widespread in Switzerland: racial profiling. This practice, based on the delineation of the belonging from the non-belonging, of the human from the human other, builds on the construction of the white innocent self and the threatening other, a construct that also underlies and is reinforced through this popular initiative: The construction of the threatening human other in and through the Swiss legislation for deportations echoes in this policing practices and is furthered through this practice. Furthermore, racial profiling results in the creation of multiple human other conditions, structured along racial lines, as the policing practice raises the threat for those that are deportable and marked as the other. Thus, deportabilities are structured through the ontological colonial line and the imaginaries associated with the constructs of the threatening other and the white innocent Swiss. However, as I eventually want to argue, it is not alone along the racial line that the human other and the human other is created: It is also the legal line, or rather the intersection of racial and legal lines. Lines that cannot be hold apart if one thinks of how the “country’s direct democratic system relentlessly allow[ed] for race to be mobilized,”¹¹⁷ and to shape the legal line.

3.1. RACE AND RACIALIZATION IN SWITZERLAND

3.1.1. COLONIAL SWITZERLAND

In order to examine the entanglement of racial formations, deportation and deportabilities in Switzerland, I start with a historical outline of the formation and transformation of racial formations in this spatiotemporal context. This spatial and temporal contextualization is crucial for an elaboration of the entanglement of racial formations with deportation as a bordering practice, and of the extent to which these practices are situated in colonial continuities. In line with the conceptualization of white innocence, the racial structuring and the colonial continuities inscribed in contemporary Switzerland are little acknowledged.

¹¹⁴ Bundeskanzlei 2022b.

¹¹⁵ Boulila 2019, 1401.

¹¹⁶ Purtschert, Lüthi and Falk 2013, 14.

¹¹⁷ Boulila 2019, 1401.

According to the anthropologist Viviane Cretton, race and the concomitant relations of domination are not acknowledged as being inherent in contemporary Switzerland in both the dominant public and academic discourse.¹¹⁸ This is related to the lack of recognition of the Swiss state's and actors' complicities with European colonization and colonialism, but also to the failure to recognize the prominence of colonial imaginaries in dominant discourses.¹¹⁹ Colonial imaginaries are still present, as Cretton argues. This comes as no surprise given the fact that race was invented in Europe – also at Swiss universities. Under the guise of scientific research, leading Swiss universities of their time established and defined characteristics that were used to create racial difference, to delineate the human from the human other. “[I]nstruments, observation sheets, measurement instructions, measurement data, concepts, problems and research programmes”¹²⁰ circulated between the Swiss universities and colonized regions. The creation of race as a mechanism to delineate the human from the human other, as Wynter conceptualized it, has thus been created and shaped with the active participation of Switzerland. More than that, the Swiss participation was of particular importance for the supposed scientific nature of the invention of race: as the Swiss state was formally not involved in imperial projects, the Swiss universities had the reputation of being independent from imperial domination but being purely scientific.¹²¹ Thus, the Swiss independence from imperial domination and colonial projects is not just omitted today, but has instead already been actively excluded from the self-presentation during European colonization and colonialism.

The omission of the interconnections of Switzerland and colonialism as well as imperialism has to do with the fact that Switzerland was never in possession of formal colonies. This narrative persists and fulfills its role of negating the relevance and urgency of engaging with Switzerland's colonial past. Switzerland has indeed never been in possession of formal colonies. However, multiple Swiss actors were involved in the transatlantic slave and colonial trade, mercenarism, missionization and the consumption of colonial resources.¹²² The multiple forms of colonial involvement are overlooked in the contemporary self-representation of Switzerland. And just the fact that Switzerland was not a formal colonial power allowed “Switzerland [...] to benefit as a ‘tertius gaudens’ from the imperialism of the others.”¹²³ The position of the ‘tertius gaudens’ furthermore permitted the continuation of economic profits after formal decolonization processes: “Swiss companies [were able] to successfully secure their position after decolonization, acting as an ‘unsuspicious’ partner vis-à-vis the former colonies.”¹²⁴ The involvement of Swiss companies and

¹¹⁸ Purtschert, Lüthi, and Falk 2013, 13.

¹¹⁹ Cretton 2018, 843.

¹²⁰ Germann 2015, 65.

¹²¹ Germann 2015, 55.

¹²² Barros and Nicacio Lima 2022, 135.

¹²³ Purtschert, Lüthi, and Falk 2013, 16.

¹²⁴ Purtschert, Lüthi, and Falk 2013, 16.

actors in colonial trading companies and the transatlantic slave trade still have consequences for the neocolonial economies of Swiss actors today, as they can fall back on exploitative relationships established in the colonial context.¹²⁵

Thus, one can state: Switzerland does have colonial histories. The country has contributed to the creation of race as a mechanism to delineate the human from the human other. It has further participated militarily and economically in imperial and colonial projects. In multiple forms, Switzerland contributed to the development of relations of domination that continue to permeate global relations until this time. These relations of domination and the racial formations entangled with them continue to shape Switzerland, and Switzerland has been and still is reinstating and reshaping these relations of domination. The omission of the Swiss ties to colonialism started during the period of imperial and colonial projects and continues to this day. In the following, I examine the self-conception that is based on historical amnesia, using the concept of white innocence to outline how racial formations shape and structure contemporary Switzerland, and how this is still not recognized and acknowledged.

3.1.2. CONSTRUCTING THE THREATENING OTHER AND THE INNOCENT SELF

Thinking with the concept of Stuart Hall, the self-conception of Switzerland as being free from colonial histories and continuities is shaped through historical amnesia.¹²⁶ Historical amnesia includes the active forgetting of the involvement in colonialism and its continuities. This active forgetting goes hand in hand with white innocence. This concept has been conceptualized by Gloria Wekker in relation to the Netherlands. It captures “ways of being in the world. It encapsulates a dominant way in which the Dutch think of themselves, as being a small, but just, ethical nation; color-blind, thus free of racism; as being inherently on the moral and ethical high ground, thus a guiding light to other folks and nations.”¹²⁷ These innocent ways of being in the world underlie not only the Netherlands, but also Switzerland. Innocence is associated with elements that are identified with in the Dutch but also in the Swiss context. I want to dedicate some space to these elements in order to examine the form white innocence takes in the contemporary Swiss context.

One of these elements is the dominant influence of the Christian religion. This influence can also be noticed in Switzerland, even if it is rarely acknowledged. However, one can speak of an unmarked norm that has shaped Switzerland in dominant imaginaries, which might have led to a

¹²⁵ Kuhn 2013, 268.

¹²⁶ Goldberg 2006, 337.

¹²⁷ Wekker 2016, 2.

strong identification with the Christian concept of innocence. However, the element that I am particularly struck by is the association of innocence with being small:¹²⁸ The dominant self-conception of Switzerland is that of a small nation in need of (self)protection against evil external influences. This (self-)protection takes on gendered dimensions, in accordance with the feminine connotation associated with innocence.¹²⁹ The construction of the evil external influence and the threatening other, I argue, are both rooted in colonial histories. These constructions of the other are formed along racial lines, and over time new lines and rationales have been added to create the threatening other. In regard of the feminine connotation of innocence, one cannot help but think of the construction of threatening non-white masculinities. Non-white masculinities, in particular Black¹³⁰ masculinities, are marked as the other and constructed as threatening the ideal of white, bourgeois femininity. This construction goes back to European colonial discourses in which Black masculinities were represented as the dangerous, “in the colonial imagination, Black men have *always* been portrayed as potential criminals,”¹³¹ while Black femininities were constructed in distinction to innocent bourgeois white femininities.¹³² These ideas were of course also circulated in Switzerland in a multitude of manners.¹³³

However, the association with crime is not limited to blackness and to Black masculinities in particular. In Switzerland it is also the Yeniche people who are being associated with criminality.¹³⁴ This construction is rooted in longstanding Antiziganism. Already in the period of nation-state building mid-1800, Yeniche were constructed as a threat to the nation-state, as the pursuit of a non-sedentary way of life was considered to be disrupting “a distinct national reorganization of symbolic, social and political boundaries.”¹³⁵ During the upcoming of colonialism and the construction of the other along racialized lines, Yeniche became the “internal other”¹³⁶ to Switzerland, a construction that further underpinned the persecution and subjugation of Yeniche. Thus, the other, constructed in and through colonialism, along gendered and racialized lines, is associated with threat. Thinking with Sara Ahmed, those constructed as the threatening others become fearsome objects, the fear that this construction produces is attached and inscribed into bodies.¹³⁷ Thus, racialized bodies and populations become the embodied threat to white innocent Switzerland.

¹²⁸ Wekker 2016, 17.

¹²⁹ Wekker 2016, 17.

¹³⁰ In this thesis, I write Black with a capital initial. This corresponds to a writing practice that denotes Black as a self-identification to refer to a political and social position that is empoweringly referred to in an anti-racist struggle. Similar, white is a constructed political and social position with real consequences, here written in lower case.

¹³¹ Wa Baile et al. 2019, 16. own translation.

¹³² Purtschert 2013, 97.

¹³³ Purtschert 2019.

¹³⁴ Wa Baile et al. 2019, 12.

¹³⁵ Jain 2019, 45, own translation.

¹³⁶ Purtschert 2019, 105.

¹³⁷ Ahmed 2004, 127.

However, racial delineation as a distinction between the threatening other and the threatened self has transformed over time. The racial delineation is no longer the sole line of differentiating. Considering the discussion of the transformation of racial formations in Europe and the statement of an age of race in denial,¹³⁸ belonging to the self and the other is shaped through race being buried alive. Race is still operating to delineate belonging from non-belonging, the human from the human other, but its operation is omitted and veiled in other rationales. This does not mean that racial delineations no longer matter. Rather, it means that racial delineations have assumed other forms, have been transformed and are embedded in other discourses. Racial naturalism, as Goldberg calls it, has been superimposed by racial historicism and at one point by race in denial. With regard to contemporary European lines of delineation, El-Tayeb describes how culture and religion markers are used to make a distinction she calls “a cultural-religious framing of exclusions.”¹³⁹ This exclusion is constructed along racial lines but not recognized as such.

In Switzerland, the mobilization of religion is quite apparent. The unmarked norm of Christian religion renders non-Christian religions to the other, in particular, one can observe the othering of Islam. This can be illustrated when thinking of the “minaret ban initiative” (Minarettverbotsinitiative), a blatant moment of othering. The “minaret ban initiative” has been adopted via a popular initiative in 2009. Therewith, the construction of minarets was banned, a ban that I consider to be both based on othering along religious lines and as reinforcing this religious line of delineating the belonging from the non-belonging, the human from the human other. The referendum campaign was characterized by a discourse in and through which Muslim communities were constructed as ‘backward’, ‘barbaric’ and ‘dangerous’.¹⁴⁰ This construction was made with reference to women's rights, a reference that reminds me of the feminine connotation of innocence and the colonial construction of threatening Black masculinities, but also the construction of the other as a threat. In the “minaret ban initiative” however, this narrative is framed in religious and cultural terms; the threatening other is no longer, or no longer solely, constructed along racial lines. Rather, this threatening other is created along religious and so-called cultural lines.

3.1.3. THE EXTERNALIZATION OF THE THREATENING OTHER

This construction of the threatening other, be it openly racialized, or veiled in religious or cultural terms, leads to the construction of the innocent self in need of protection. The threat is associated and inscribed into the bodies of the other, but it is further constructed as being the external threat to the small nation of Switzerland. Thus, those constructed as the other along racial, religious and

¹³⁸ Maldonado-Torres 2010, 81.

¹³⁹ El-Tayeb 2011, xiv.

¹⁴⁰ Boutilala 2019, 1403.

cultural lines, are imagined as the other coming from the geographic outside. El-Tayeb theorizes this as the externalization of racialized populations. The “[o]ther is necessarily conceptualized as a migrant, that is, as originating outside of Europe.”¹⁴¹ This externalization of the other is also included in the conceptualization of Dutch white innocence: although a large part of the Dutch population has “migrant ancestry,”¹⁴² this migrant past has not become part of the Dutch self-conception.

The omission of the migrant past applies to Switzerland as well, where in the dominant political and media discourse, migration is presented and problematized as an unprecedented phenomena. The historian Kijan Espahangizi summarizes this narrative quite aptly: “Migration is [imagined as] one of the central challenges of our time.”¹⁴³ This narrative is at odds with the historical significance and importance of migration in and for Switzerland: Following the First World War, labor migration predominated migration patterns to Switzerland. During this period, migration policies aimed at promoting and regulating labor migration in line with Switzerland’s economic interests.¹⁴⁴ In the 1970s, there was a shift from labor migration to refugee movements, a form of migration that was countered through asylum policies,¹⁴⁵ a repressive approach to migration that continues and has been exacerbated until this day. Thus, migration is not a new phenomenon, rather, migration has been a fundamental part of Swiss histories of the last decades. However, the “migrant population” is still depicted as a non-belonging minority and thus, “natio-ethno-cultural” imaginaries of belonging are reinscribed and maintained.¹⁴⁶

These “natio-ethno-cultural” imaginaries of belonging are part of the white innocence that structures the dominant Swiss self-perception. The self, innocent of a colonial past and its continuities, is characterized by this innocence, connotated with the white bourgeois construct of femininity and the need to protect this white innocent self. The construction of the white innocent self occurs in demarcation of the threatening other. This other, rooted in colonial imaginaries, has taken on new forms in its contemporary manifestation, along racial, religious and cultural terms. The other is constructed and externalized, the other is the one coming from beyond the border. This goes hand in hand with the conceptualization of borders as multi-layered lines consisting of administrative as well as ontological lines. The ontological line, the line delineating the other from the white innocent self is inscribed into bodies, moreover, it sticks to bodies.¹⁴⁷ This does not only

¹⁴¹ El-Tayeb 2011, 180.

¹⁴² Wekker 2016, 6.

¹⁴³ Espahangizi 2019, 149.

¹⁴⁴ Angehrn and Stojnic n.d.

¹⁴⁵ Hess-Lüttich 1997, 200.

¹⁴⁶ Espahangizi 2019, 151. own translation.

¹⁴⁷ Benyera 2019, 15.

mean that those people who are constructed as the other and cross the border to Switzerland do not leave the ontological colonial line behind, that they cannot belong, but that their non-belonging is inscribed into their bodies. The ontological color line remains visible and marks them as the non-belonging human other. This embodiment of the ontological colonial line further means that people who have never crossed the administrative border are also marked as the non-belonging, as one can also state considering the externalization of racialized populations from Switzerland. I once again repeat the statement of El-Tayeb, as it captures this process aptly: the “[o]ther is necessarily conceptualized as a migrant, that is, as originating outside of Europe, even if this origin is two, three, or more generations removed.”¹⁴⁸ In relation to Switzerland, Espahangizi describes that this imagining of the other as migrant is naturalized with the term “xenophobia.” Migrants are imagined as foreign without recognizing and naming the processes of making them foreign.¹⁴⁹ This process of externalizing the other goes hand in hand with the construction of an unmarked white innocent norm that characterizes Switzerland.¹⁵⁰

3.2. RACIALIZED AND RACIALIZING POLICIES: THE DEPORTATION INITIATIVE

This particular form of the white innocent norm remains unmarked, just as the colonial continuities that result in the externalization of the other and its association with migration are not named as such. Yet, in the Swiss context, deportations are entangled with particular formations of white innocence and constructions of the threatening other. This approach to deportations and deportabilities contradicts dominant narratives that frame deportations as a consequence of migration policies alone. This, I contend, is too short-sighted: On the one hand, I outlined the entanglement of borders, bordering practices and racial formations to an extent that I hope it became apparent that one cannot consider deportations in isolation from racial formations. On the other hand, policies and legal structures are not neutral. Rather, policies are places of the imagined and of imagining and embedded in and intertwined with relations of domination. Therefore, one needs to understand them in their entanglement with relations of domination. This entanglement becomes particularly rampant considering the deportation initiative.

The popular initiative “für die Ausschaffung krimineller Ausländer (Ausschaffungsinitiative)” (for the deportation of criminal foreigners (deportation initiative)) launched by the Swiss People’s Party

¹⁴⁸ El-Tayeb 2011, 180.

¹⁴⁹ Espahangizi 2015, 11.

¹⁵⁰ Boulila 2019, 1408.

came to fruition in 2008.¹⁵¹ It regulates the deportation of people other than Swiss nationals having committed certain crimes. In the legal wording this reads: “They (= the foreign nationals) lose their right of residence as well as all legal claims to residence in Switzerland, irrespective of their status under aliens law, if they: have been convicted with final effect for an intentional homicide, for rape or another serious sexual offense, for another violent offense such as robbery, for human trafficking, drug trafficking or a burglary offense; or have improperly received social insurance benefits or social assistance.”¹⁵² This establishes a link between deportations and crime and creates the idea of deportations being about “creating security.”¹⁵³ Even though this initiative dates back more than ten years, it has been powerful in creating not alone a legal framework, but also in continuing and rewriting colonial imaginaries – and thus continuing and rewriting racial formations and the constructions of the self and other, imbuing these constructions with imaginaries rooting in colonialism and ascribing further meaning to them.

The demand for security, as indicated above, is based on colonial continuities in the construction of the threatening other and the innocent self. In this respect, this initiative is nothing new but mobilized images with long histories. Further, it is embedded in a long history of campaigns against migrants,¹⁵⁴ which, with the transformation into racial historicism and the rise of racism without racisms,¹⁵⁵ have been presented as a question of cultural and religious incompatibilities. That these campaigns were shaped by racial formations has been denied at all times. This was also the case after a poster of the deportation initiative caused controversy. On the poster are three white sheep on a red background, which is indicated by a white cross as representing Switzerland. One of the three white sheep kicks a black sheep with both hind legs out of the area marked as Switzerland. Next to it is written: “Creating security.” The accusation that the white and black sheep are based on racial imaginaries has been rejected by the initiators of the initiative.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ Bundeskanzlei 2022b.

¹⁵² Bundeskanzlei 2022a, own translation

¹⁵³ Initiativplakat, own translation.

¹⁵⁴ Boulila 2019, 1403.

¹⁵⁵ Maldonado-Torres 2010, 81.

¹⁵⁶ Boulila 2019, 1404.



SVP 2007, "Sicherheit schaffen."

I could not agree more with this accusation. These sheep and the discourse that underlies the initiative are indeed based on racial imaginaries: The initiative builds on racial formations and mobilizes the associations made with them. The deportation initiative mobilizes the white innocence that is created in distinction to the dangerous other. The innocence that is associated with the perception of Switzerland as a small nation that must protect itself against the outside world and external threats appears here to an utmost graphic extent. However, this threat does not come from the outside, but also from within – from those who do not conform to the white norm and are thus imagined and marked as the other. The deportation initiative creates the idea that this threat can be addressed through the deportation of individuals, the threat becomes thus tangible since it is associated with certain bodies. It is inscribed into these bodies along the ontological colonial line, the threat becomes embodied in the fearsome other.

The meanings and imaginaries the deportation initiative builds upon and further reinscribes effect more than an individual person but concerns the entire social structure. Those non-belonging to white Switzerland become the embodiment of threat, while those belonging are imagined as being threatened. These imaginaries root in colonialism, in the imaginaries of Black masculinities as a threat, of Yeniche as potential criminals, and far more manifestations of colonial imaginaries that have transformed and been veiled in terms of culture and religion. The particular racial formations that are linked to deportation thus have a long history. This also shows in the appearance of "rape or other serious sexual offenses" in the initiative text. While the Swiss People's Party is known for

its anti-feminist demands and patriarchal discourses, the party mobilizes in and with this initiative the construction of white bourgeois femininities as being threatened by Black masculinities. The construction of white bourgeois femininities and Black, impetuous masculinities are deeply rooted in colonial representations that have also been widely circulated in Switzerland and that are inscribed in contemporary racial formations.

Furthermore, the deportation initiative constructs the threat of abusive welfare receipt, once again placing all non-Swiss citizens under general suspicion of threatening white innocent Switzerland. This narrative is again rooted in white innocence, albeit in a Swiss-specific form. I want to argue that part of the innocence in the dominant self-perception is the image of the humble mountain people who have worked hard for their successes.¹⁵⁷ Patricia Purtschert, known for her work on postcolonial Switzerland, examines this image in terms of the attribution of industriousness to whiteness as it circulated in colonial representations in Switzerland. These colonial representations, however, are not immutable and stable: In colonial representations, industriousness also served as a characteristic that renders white, or the lack of which calls whiteness into question. Implicit in this association of whiteness and industriousness is the denial of the exploitation that underpins success within capitalism.¹⁵⁸ The image of the industrious mountain people having generated wealth through their hard work is deeply anchored in historical amnesia. However, Switzerland has built its wealth on exploitation, including colonial and neocolonial exploitation, extraction and through the relations of domination that have arisen from colonialism and that continue to structure exploitation until today. It is a driving force in forced migration and characterizes the conditions migrants are subjected to.¹⁵⁹ In light of these forms of exploitation that structure the Swiss economic wealth, it seems all the more cynical that migrants are imagined as exploiting Switzerland. But this is precisely the image the deportation initiative creates. Thus, the initiative not only roots in colonial formations of race, but also solidifies them.

Thus, the legal framework is not to be isolated from relations of domination that stem from colonialism. Rather, these relations of domination, in this thesis the racial formations, must be considered in their constitutive role for the construction of legal framework in order to gain a nuanced understanding of the complexities of the initiative, its impact and its productive power. While this initiative de facto rendered all those without a Swiss passport deportable, not all people without Swiss citizenship are imagined as the other and attributed with the meanings the initiative reinscribes and solidifies. In other words, while the other defined in and through a legal framework

¹⁵⁷ Purtschert 2019, 297.

¹⁵⁸ Purtschert 2019, 103.

¹⁵⁹ MCharek 2020.

becomes deportable, the meanings associated with the deportable, such as being a threat, are not attributed to the legal other, but the racialized other. That is, if a person without a Swiss passport is considered to belong to white Switzerland, the effects on that person are different than on a person constructed as non-belonging. In the following, I chose to elaborate on the illegal but widespread policing practice of racial profiling to enable a better understanding of the complexities and multiplicities of the formation of deportabilities along the lines of racial formations.

3.3. RACIAL PROFILING AND DEPORTABILITIES IN THE PLURAL

The deportation initiative has mobilized meanings rooted in colonialism and attached them to the construct of the other. This other, framed as one without Swiss citizenship, is in fact the racialized other, who is thus presented as a criminal threatening the white innocence of Switzerland and exploiting the country's modest and industrious nature. White Switzerland, innocent, modest, hard-working, is under pressure from outside – and from within, embodied by the racialized other. This is reflected in the practice of racial profiling, which is prohibited but widespread in Switzerland: Otherness must be searched, controlled and removed, in some cases by deportation. This racial practice is thus rooting in similar imaginaries to the ones deportations and the deportation initiative are producing and reproducing. It is a practice building upon these imaginaries but also reinforcing them. But the main reason I mention this policing practice is to demonstrate the multiplicities of deportabilities as the danger of racial profiling entails the danger of deportation. Considering this racial policing practice, I demonstrate below how colonial relations of domination and their continuities shape the condition of being deportable, creating multiple conditions I denote as deportabilities in the plural form.

Racial profiling is based on “state-legitimized criteria of an imagined threatening ‘otherness’ for which public space is to be searched and ‘cleansed of.’”¹⁶⁰ This practice is based on constructions of the threatening other and those suspected of threatening otherness are at risk of being removed, regardless of their citizenship and residence status. More than that, racial profiling is in fact an instrument for constructing the other irrespective of these legal factors: The “otherness,” as a Black person with a Swiss passport describes it, is based upon her belonging being denied again and again and in her being “symbolically expelled from the place that she sees as her natural center of life.”¹⁶¹ The border, as conceived by Benyera,¹⁶² is inscribed into bodies even if no administrative border has ever been crossed. Racial profiling is based on this inscribed border, but racial profiling is also

¹⁶⁰ Wa Baile et al. 2019, 9, own translation.

¹⁶¹ Plümecke and Wilopo 2019, 143, own translation.

¹⁶² Benyera 2019.

a means of inscribing this border in bodies. In a groundbreaking anthology on racial profiling in Switzerland, the editors write in the introduction: “With the help of racial profiling, practices of racialization [...] are circulated, exhibited, legitimized and normalized in a society in the first place.”¹⁶³ Racial profiling is thus yet another means of constructing the other and is connected to deportabilities.

In line with the logic of the externalization of racialized populations, this means that the practice of racial profiling not only builds on the externalization of racialized populations, but also contributes to the symbolic expulsion of racialized populations from Switzerland, regardless of their legal status. It is a tool that builds on the construction of the criminalized other, but also contributes once again to the public perception of the racialized other as potentially criminal. For racial profiling is hardly perceived as a racial practice. In the manner of racisms without racism it is presented as a police practice based solely on suspicion. I do not want to spend time here refuting this, as there are more than enough sources to be convinced of the structural racisms of the police: reports from people affected, human rights organizations, academic debates, just to name a few. For those that are not only symbolically but also legally deportable, racial profiling can lead to their deportation. Moreover, it is a practice that significantly shapes the condition of being liable for deportation. Those imagined as the other are in constant threat of police controls and thus of deportation. Deportation thus shapes people’s lives far beyond the actual deportation and inscribes itself deeply into everyday experiences.

This leads to a situation where people must become as invisible as possible not to be associated to the other by white Switzerland. A person who has been illegalized by the Swiss state stated in an interview with the magazine *Papierlose Zeitung* (*paperless newspaper*): “If I soon go outside, the police could arrest me and put me back in jail [...] when you’re outside, you’re always trying to find a safe route without a police control. It’s constant stress, especially on the street.”¹⁶⁴ This can lead some people to avoid being in public as much as possible. Other people report attempting to conform as much as possible to a white norm through outward appearance and therewith to appear inconspicuous. One affected person reports this as his trick: “I wear a nice classic suit with the hat, just to not be recognized by the police [...]. This trick – I used it many times,”¹⁶⁵ and another person confirms: “I wear better shirts [...]. But I don’t feel like wearing a suit every day. Sometimes I just want to stay at home because I’m just afraid to go outside.”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Wa Baile et al. 2019, 10, own translation.

¹⁶⁴ Redaktion Papierlose Zeitung 2020.

¹⁶⁵ Wa Baile et al. 2019, 25.

¹⁶⁶ Wa Baile et al. 2019, 26.

As I indicated above, whiteness is not a stable social category, but is malleable and mutable, and is interwoven with other social power relations. Hard work, as a meaning whiteness is associated to, also shimmers through in this passing strategy: The suit as a symbol of hard work can allow for better passing. This fact that people are controlled along racial lines and thus exposed to the danger of deportation shows that deportation and deportabilities are not alone legal constructions, but are further shaped along racial lines. Thus, the condition of being deportable is multiple: The threat of deportation is greater for a person rendered into the other than for a person who is legally deportable but can pass as belonging to white Switzerland.

3.4. DEPORTABILITIES AND THE HUMAN OTHER CONDITION

The conditions of being deportable are structured through racial formations. But the condition of being deportable is created through Swiss policies in the first place – but again, considering the deportation initiative, one can state that deportabilities are formed along racial lines as these lines enter the policies that illegalize people and render them deportable. Thus, Swiss legislation appears as a mechanism for denying people their belonging to the human: This is not surprising when one considers how colonial imaginaries and the construction of belonging along colonial and racial lines enter into legislation.

3.4.1. DEPORTABILITIES: CREATING EXPLOITABILITIES

Although racial lines structure the conditions of deportation, also those deportable who are passing as belonging to the white norm are confined to the state of disenfranchisement. Due to the illegalization through the Swiss law, access to legal protection is not guaranteed. Deportable people cannot report anything, as the arrest for illegal residence is lurking at every police station. This leads, among other things, to people without regular residence status being forced into clandestine employment – because it can be expected that these people will not have access to the justice system in Switzerland. Because the legal protection is missing, work security does not exist. A shadow economy is created,¹⁶⁷ those who are deportable mostly work in the low-wage sector of the Swiss economy, such as in construction, catering, cleaning or in so-called 24-hour care models. “The wage of an illegalized worker in construction is two to three times lower than the minimum wage. The treatment of undocumented workers is ruthless, the working and living conditions are inhumane [...]. Everything is geared exclusively to the needs of the companies.”¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Redaktion Papierlose Zeitung 2020.

¹⁶⁸ Coppola 2021.

People thus become exploitable; a mechanism Bhattacharyya describes as a “machine of inclusion.”¹⁶⁹ This is also related to deportations: deportations as a means to align the ontological with the administrative line are far from being implemented in absolute terms. The deportation practice is not alone a practice of deporting people, but also a practice for creating the condition of being liable to deportation. And this condition is fundamental for state economies, as De Genova has already theorized.¹⁷⁰ An activist of the Sans-Papiers-Anlaufstelle of the city of Zurich SPAZ describes Sans-Papiers accordingly as a cyclical shock absorber: In times when the Swiss economy is in need of undocumented labor, fewer people are deported and more are left in the condition of being deportable, allowing the economy to satisfy its need for cheap labor. In times this is less needed, people can be deported – they are not useful anymore for the state economy.¹⁷¹ Illegalized people in Switzerland are disenfranchised, they are turned into what W.E.B. Du Bois describes as the dispossessed, the unfree, those not belonging “within the nation-state or within humanity itself.”¹⁷² This, it seems to me, shows to what extent the line delineating the human from the human other is not stable and that it adapts to and is transformed in and through new circumstances.

3.4.2. DEPORTABILITIES: DEPRIVING THE RIGHT TO HAVE RIGHTS

This unfreedom is also evident considering Switzerland’s illegalization of people through Swiss law: Some people can be deported in legal terms, but their actual deportation is not realizable. This is the case when there is no bilateral readmission agreement or an agreement that entails certain conditions Switzerland does not meet. In such cases, Switzerland cannot resort to the means of deportation to expulse the non-belonging from the state and align the administrative with the ontological line.

There are multiple countries that do not cooperate with the Swiss state in terms of deportation. I chose to use the readmission agreement with Algeria as an example to make it more tenable; And to sharpen the perception of the interconnections between different deportation practices. For while the bilateral agreement with Algeria in most cases does not allow the deportation of Algerian citizens, the Swiss government is putting pressure on the Algerian government to change this – and in the meantime, Switzerland seems to have found loopholes to deport Algerians in chain deportations via Turkey to Algeria.¹⁷³ This increasing deportation rate, even if Switzerland’s influence will not be too great, could, as will be seen in the chapter on Algerian deportation

¹⁶⁹ Bhattacharyya 2018, 73.

¹⁷⁰ De Genova 2005; 2010.

¹⁷¹ Interview

¹⁷² Jung n.d.

¹⁷³ Personal communication, 2021.

practices, further increase the number of deportations to Niger. But now back to the legally possible but practically impossible deportations from Switzerland: while there is a readmission agreement with the Algerian state in force, the Algerian state does not accept deportations that are conducted through the use of physical violence of the officers. Deportations in Switzerland can be carried out on three levels, differing according to the level of violence used. Level I involves police escort to the aircraft of a scheduled flight, but the flight itself is without police escort and captivation. Level II involves captivation and police escort on a scheduled flight, and level IV is performed on a chartered flight with police escort, intensive captivation up to and including force jackets, the use of a wheelchair to transport the immobilized person onto the aircraft.¹⁷⁴ The deportations including the use of force are thus not possible to Algeria.

This means that some Algerian citizens who are denied their right to stay are illegalized by Swiss laws: They are not allowed to be in Switzerland, they are not allowed to work and thus not allowed to earn money, but they are also not entitled to social assistance and other state benefits. The only thing they are entitled to is emergency aid. In some cantons the emergency aid are different monetary amounts, in some cantons it is only food or food vouchers. What these sums of money and food vouchers have in common is that they are not enough to live on; at most, it is enough to live on as a human other. To obtain these financial means, people must sign for them in the so-called return centers those illegalized are forced to live in. Through these forced signatures, sometimes several times a day, they are confined to these return centers. This confinement goes even further for some. In addition to the forced signatures, some living in a return center are forbidden to leave the municipalities their return center is located in:¹⁷⁵ They might be those that Du Bois called the unfree. Most of the time, these return centers are located in secluded places and difficult to reach by public transport,¹⁷⁶ participation in public life is close to impossible. Some of the return centers are underground bunkers, some are container settlements. One bunker, known through the vocal protest and resistance of its inhabitants, has been called a “collective cemetery:”¹⁷⁷ It is buried in a wooded hill, without daylight and fresh air.

In these shelters, fear is dominant, as the *Papierlose Zeitung* titled: “Growing up in fear.”¹⁷⁸ People are disenfranchised, “the label ‘illegal’ in a way deprives them of their right to have rights.”¹⁷⁹ Because even if return centers are intended for people with the label illegal, people can be arrested

¹⁷⁴ See Augenauf n.d. 39; Nationale Kommission zur Verhütung von Folter (NKVF) n.d.

¹⁷⁵ Wo Unrecht zu Recht wird n.d.

¹⁷⁶ Wo Unrecht zu Recht wird n.d.

¹⁷⁷ Diriwächter 2019.

¹⁷⁸ Barfuss 2018.

¹⁷⁹ Barfuss 2018.

at any time and without justification in the very return centers in which they are forced to live. “Deportations take place regularly – usually in the early morning hours and always without notice. The children are torn from their sleep unprepared. Again and again, there are violent scenes when people refuse to be taken away by the cantonal police without resistance. Several times women were dragged by male police officers through the courtyard across the floor to the police car; again and again parents are led away in handcuffs in front of their children.”¹⁸⁰ Inhumane conditions dominate these return centers, as is time and again pointed out by the activists affected and solidarity groups. This inhumanity, I argue, can be placed in its colonial continuities using the concept of coloniality of being. Racial delineations as a delineation not only of the free from the unfree, but also of the human from the human other, are the lines along which people are confined into these centers. The inhumane conditions are rooted in this delineation of the human from the human other. The human other, whose belonging to the human is repeatedly questioned by what Maldonado-Torres calls Manichean skepticism, has little claim to rights: In the words of the paperless newspaper, the human other is deprived of the right to have rights. This right to have rights is deprived through the illegalization by Swiss laws.

The deprivation of rights can be observed in an almost absurd form in the context of enforcement detention.¹⁸¹ This becomes relevant in the case of people being legally deportable, but whose deportation cannot be implemented, for example prohibited by the Algerian readmission agreement, which does not allow deportations in charter flights, the highest level of violence used.¹⁸² People resisting deportations to Algeria are thus not readmitted. In order to force people to cooperate in their own deportation and to be able to deport them in scheduled flights, the Swiss state detains them, the sole basis for this enforcement detention being illegal residence. The stated aim of this detention is to wear people down, to render the condition of being deportable so unbearable that they consent to their own deportation and cooperate.¹⁸³ People are affected differently by this enforcement detention. For example, from a state agreement perspective, people from Algeria are often affected by this enforcement detention. However, even here, those who are constructed along racial lines as the other of Switzerland are at greater risk of being arrested through racial practices such as racial profiling and placement in administrative detention such as enforcement detention.

¹⁸⁰ Barfuss 2018.

¹⁸¹ humanrights.ch 2016.

¹⁸² Kälin 2019.

¹⁸³ humanrights.ch 2007.

3.5. CONCLUSION

Deportations und deportabilities both shape and are shaped by racial formations. These bordering practice are based upon the construction of the white innocent Swiss self and the threatening other, imaginaries that root in Switzerland's omitted colonial histories. These constructions along racial lines enter legal frameworks that regulate deportations, therefore the ontological colonial line is inscribed into these legislations, as one can see considering the deportation imitative. However, the ontological colonial line is not alone inscribed into it, the deportation initiative is also reinforcing and shaping the ontological colonial line in attributing meaning to the human and the human other constructed along this line.

In the case of the deportation initiative, the unmarked white innocence of Switzerland was maintained, attributing meanings such as in need of being protected, industrious and modest. The deportation initiative not alone stabilizes the white innocence, but also contributes to the construction of the human other as threatening to what the white innocence represents. This initiative reproduced and constructed the threatening non-belonging and inscribed this imagined threat into bodies along racial lines, rendering all those marked as the other to suspects of non-belonging and the meanings associated with non-belonging, reinforcing the association of racialized populations with crime and threat. This connection is not a recent one. It roots in colonial histories and imaginaries that persist until this time. Thus, deportations and deportabilities are a means to maintain and reinforce these colonial imaginaries. These colonial imaginaries underlie also the racist police practice of racial profiling, a practice that threatens those marked as the other and associated with crime and threat. In particular those who can be expelled not alone symbolically, but actually.

Racial profiling thus pushes those not belonging to the white norm and being deportable out of the public perception and creates the human other condition. Thus, as I tried to argue, the line along which the human other and thus the human other condition are created is a racial one that is interwoven with the legal line. One has to keep in mind that the legal line is in itself shaped through racial formations, an entanglement that becomes rampant considering the deportation initiative. Following the line of thought that race is buried alive, the presence of racial formations in legal frameworks is rather an absent-presence. Thus, the legal line is permeated through racial formations and the legal production of the human other is not isolated from the racial one. Still, as the significance of the racial policing practice for the creation of multiple deportabilities demonstrates, multiple deportabilities are shaped through the intersection of policies and racial practices such as racial profiling, both entangled with racial formations and creating multiplicities of the human other condition.

CHAPTER 4

TRANSMEDITERRANEAN DEPORTATIONS, DEPORTABILITIES AND RACIAL FORMATIONS

Switzerland is not the only site where deportations, deportabilities and racial formations are entangled. In this chapter, I trace transmediterranean deportations and deportabilities to examine their manifestation in entanglement with racial formations. Unlike in the context of Switzerland, I do not attempt to adapt Goldberg and El-Tayeb's theorizations about European racial formations to a more specific spatiotemporal site and look at them in their particular manifestation, but rather refer to their theorizations in their generalizing form of European racial formations: This is because transmediterranean deportations are not just a practice of individual states, but a practice that takes place within the framework of the European migration and border control and its externalization, and thus I think it is useful to consider imaginaries of Europe and of the European, as it is these imaginaries that are mobilized, reinforced and restated and the same imaginaries that manifest in the delineation of the human and the human other. Furthermore, the Mediterranean is of symbolic significance in the narratives that demand the protection of Europe and the European, it is the moat of the Fortress Europe.¹⁸⁴ It has become a site of manifestation of the line delineating the European human from the non-European human other in the most brutal form: in subjecting those constructed as the non-European human other to inconceivable cruelties, in letting them die, better yet, in making die thousands of human beings considered to be the non-European human other in Eurocentric perception.¹⁸⁵

The Mediterranean is a contested spatial and temporal site that has produced particular racial formations. In reference to racial regionalization, these formations have been termed racial Mediterraneanization. This particular racial formation has come into being through a process in which multiple societies and regimes across the Mediterranean were involved in. Racial Mediterraneanization thus serves as a conceptual tool to challenge Eurocentric narratives of the Mediterranean that omit the “pre-modern interconnections and threads of ideas, practices and representations across the Mediterranean in relation to race, racism and slavery that underlie the formation of racialized regimes in Southern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.”¹⁸⁶ Such a nuanced account of racial Mediterraneanization goes beyond the scope of this thesis, nonetheless,

¹⁸⁴ The notion of Fortress Europe has been in broad use within activist and academic debates. It has since been criticized for mediating a simplistic understanding of the complexities of Europe and of migration to Europe. Nevertheless, I consider this image to be fruitful in some instances: in particular when it comes to the symbolisms of the bordering practices in the Central Mediterranean that are addressed in this chapter.

¹⁸⁵ See Mbembe 2019 on necropolitics.

¹⁸⁶ Law et.al. 2021, 4.

one should remain aware of the complexities of this racial formation in order to remember that the use of racial Europeanization for the examination of pullbacks feeds into Eurocentric imaginaries of the Mediterranean that could be defused with a different conceptualization of the Mediterranean and racial formations. However, I made the conscious decision to draw on racial Europeanization rather than racial Mediterraneanization to examine the deportation, or rather pullback practices in the Mediterranean. I took this decision in light of the outsourcing of European border control that underlies the practice of pullbacks to Libya. This practice is funded by European actors, politically supported and enabled with European technical support and exchange. In other words, it is in European interest that people are intercepted in the Mediterranean and sent back to Libya. Considering this central role of Europe as a driving force in this form of deportation, it seems appropriate to include and give analytical significance to European racial formations in an examination of this practice.

This chapter focuses on transmediterranean deportations in the Central Mediterranean and the European racial formations that are mobilized and transformed in and through the shift from pushbacks to pullbacks. In doing so, a picture of transmediterranean deportations emerges that reveals this practice's reliance on European racial formations. Furthermore, one can recognize that this practice is not alone built on, but also part of a process through which the European human and the non-European human other is recreated and infused with meaning. These meanings translate into the human other condition, that is created through transmediterranean deportations and deportabilities. The creation of the human other condition, as I want to demonstrate, feeds back into the lethal politics in the Central Mediterranean. Thus, transmediterranean deportations, deportabilities and racial formations are in a complex entanglement: feeding each other and leading to the maintenance of the Central Mediterranean as an ontological colonial line.

4.1. THE SHIFT FROM TRANSMEDITERRANEAN PUSHBACKS TO PULLBACKS

Pullbacks to Libya are concomitant to unimaginable atrocities: There are countless testimonies, reports and documentaries that attempt to recount the cruelties concurrent with pullbacks and subsequent detention. These cruelties must never cease to be denounced. Still, it must be kept in mind that these atrocities are embedded in the broader European Mediterranean migration politics. They are neither an exception nor an aberration, but inherent and intentional. This migration politics is to be outlined in the following. It is impossible to capture this politics in its complexities and in an all-encompassing form, in particular in the scope of a thesis. Therefore, I outline crucial

moments of European migration control in the Central Mediterranean that led to the cooperation with non-European actors such as the Libyan state and the so-called Libyan coast guard. This outline is supposed to enable an understanding of the shift from transmediterranean pushbacks to transmediterranean pullbacks. This shift constitutes a transformation of the European role in transmediterranean deportations, though it does not equate to the transformation of European responsibilities. Rather, as I intend to demonstrate on the basis of the embeddedness of pullbacks to Libya in a broader European politics, it is a shift that reinforces European racial formations and thus the entanglement of transmediterranean deportation, deportabilities and racial formations.

The loosening of border controls within the Schengen area through the Schengen agreements led to the reinforcement of the control of European external borders. It is important to note that the control at borders inside the Schengen area have not been abolished: This might seem true for those considered belonging to white Europe, but it is certainly not true for those suspected to be non-belonging along racial lines.¹⁸⁷ However, this is only a sidenote as this chapter focuses on the control of Europe's external borders: This control has soon been deterritorialized and mobilities are controlled not alone at the European external borders but also outside the geographical Europe – along the interests of Europe. Through this deterritorialization and externalization of migration control, the Central Mediterranean has turned into a securitized site of contested mobilities that are attempted to be controlled and halted through programs, missions, operations, means of monitoring and surveilling, and the cooperation with non-European actors.

The cooperation of the Italian state with the Libyan state on the control of transmediterranean migration began in the late 1990s. In 2000, a memorandum of intent formalized the cooperation and resulted in the continuation of bilateral discussions and the implementation of concrete actions. In accordance with the securitization of the Central Mediterranean, the Italian and Libyan state signed an agreement that introduced the “joint patrolling of coasts, ports, and bays in northern Libya to prevent people-smuggling.”¹⁸⁸ This joint patrolling was implemented in the Treaty on Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation 2008. The treaty further included an agreement that the Italian coast guard could hand over people it had rescued on the high seas to the Libyan coast guard without consideration of their legal status and claim to asylum.¹⁸⁹ In 2009, Italian authorities launched pushbacks in international and national waters to Libya, a practice that must not be confused with joint patrols, as there were no Libyan officials on the Italian vessels.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ See Häberlein 2019, M'Charek, Schramm, and Skinner 2014.

¹⁸⁸ Paoletti 2010.

¹⁸⁹ Bialasiewicz 2012, 853.

¹⁹⁰ Paoletti 2010.

The then-dictator Muammar al-Quaddafi took a contradictory position in the negotiations with the Italian state and the European Union: While he pursued a pan-Africanist line and described borders as a construction in the interest of European colonial powers, his government nevertheless strengthened the surveillance and the control of these borders.¹ The increase of the armament and control of Libyan borders and the participation of the Libyan state in the control of transmediterranean mobilities went hand in hand with the strengthening of al-Quaddafi's international position. With the fall of al-Quaddafi in 2011, the European Union and European member states, in particular the Italian state, had to reorient in the attempt to control and halt transmediterranean migration.

Part of this reorientation had been the increase in the monitoring of the Central Mediterranean and the launch of operations such as the military operation Sophia in 2015. This operation focused on the disruption of “the business model of human smuggling and trafficking.”¹⁹¹ The main purpose of this operation was to gather information on migration routes and to inspect and search vessels suspected of smuggling, thus, this operation included interventions in the Central Mediterranean. The operation that followed operation Sophia had a similar mandate: Operation Irini is supposed to monitor the United Nations arms embargo on Libya,¹⁹² and to monitor the Central Mediterranean “to contribute to the disruption of the business model of human smuggling and human trafficking.”¹⁹³ More and more, this monitoring is undertaken from the air. European actors retreat from the Central Mediterranean and focus more on the surveillance and monitoring from the air using drones,¹⁹⁴ aircrafts,¹⁹⁵ but also satellite imagery¹⁹⁶ and further technological means.¹⁹⁷ The information European actors collect is not used for search and rescue. This practice has been increased in the last decade, more than that, civil search and rescue missions are more and more criminalized. The information on transmediterranean mobilities that European actors collect is rather used to coordinate pullbacks of the so-called Libyan coast guard: The European retreat in the air has been accompanied by the building of the Libyan authorities' capacities to control mobilities through the European Union and the Italian state. Among other things, European actors funded and trained,¹⁹⁸ equipped and politically legitimized the so-called Libyan Coast Guard. This so-called coast guard is “not a single unified structure, but rather a collection of command centers

¹⁹¹ Ruiz et.al. 2021, 47.

¹⁹² Kirtzman 2020.

¹⁹³ European Council n.d.

¹⁹⁴ Monroy 2020a.

¹⁹⁵ Monroy 2020b.

¹⁹⁶ Monroy 2022.

¹⁹⁷ Monroy 2021b.

¹⁹⁸ Alarm Phone et.al. 2020, 6.

answering to different authorities and local power figures”¹⁹⁹ that are linked to multiple fractions of militias in Libya.²⁰⁰ The political legitimization of this so-called coast guard took a new step with the application to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for the declaration of a new search and rescue zone (SAR zone) to be coordinated by Libyan authorities.²⁰¹ This application was supported by European actors that financed the establishment of the coordination center and technologies needed for the declaration of a new search and rescue zone.²⁰² These structures, built up in the interest and supported through the European Union and in particular the Italian state, are now conducting transmediterranean deportations.

European actors are not alone responsible for these transmediterranean pullbacks due to their support of the Libyan structures conducting these pullbacks. There are also reports documenting that Frontex reconnaissance planes pass on information about the position of boats with migrants on board to the so-called Libyan coast guard, which then initiates the interception of these people on the basis of this information. There are further reports that the Italian authorities are contacting the so-called Libyan coast guard to intercept people in distress, framed as a rescue operation. Rather than being present in the Central Mediterranean and performing pushbacks themselves as the Italian authorities did in 2009, the European and Italian authorities’ involvement in transmediterranean deportations becomes less and less visible but their responsibilities are undiminished: A shift from pushbacks to pullbacks, the development of a “systemic policy of refoulement by proxy has taken place.”²⁰³

The transformation from transmediterranean pushbacks to pullbacks, I content, is concomitant to the European retreat in the air. Therewith, European responsibilities are attempted to be concealed. This concealment, I examine in a next step, is concomitant to the maintenance and reinscription of European racial formations, in particular European white innocence.

4.2. RACIALIZED AND RACIALIZING PULLBACKS IN THE CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN

The transformation of transmediterranean deportations, the shift from pushbacks to pullbacks, are thus embedded in the retreat of European, and in particular Italian actors, from the visible presence in the Central Mediterranean. It is further entangled with racial formations that are mobilized for

¹⁹⁹ Statewatch 2020.

²⁰⁰ Bathke 2019.

²⁰¹ Alarmphone et.al. 2020, 2.

²⁰² Alarmphone et.al. 2020, 7.

²⁰³ Alarm Phone et.al. 2020, 10.

the justification of transmediterranean deportations. The transformations of policies and European involvement in transmediterranean deportations and the racial formations are feeding into each other, as I demonstrate in the following. The line delineating the human from the human other manifests in these policies and thus also in pullbacks, and cuts deep through the Central Mediterranean. Given the fact that pullbacks are carried out in the interest of Europe and with European political, financial and technological support, it seems appropriate to consider the racial formations based on the delineation of the European human and the non-European human other in the examination of pullbacks as a racialized and racializing practice. This also became apparent in 2010, as al-Quaddafi, whose regime ruled Libya until his overthrow in 2011, demanded financial compensation in return for Libya playing the role of Europe's border guard. Otherwise, he threatened, Europe would “turn black.”²⁰⁴ In doing so, he acted on the racisms that underlie Europe and the European self-representation as white Europe. Thus, transmediterranean deportations are structured along racial lines, even if this leads to the death of those constructed as the other to the white European, as the human other to the white European human.

However, and I mention this only briefly, it is not alone European racial formations that shape the interceptions at sea and the detention of the intercepted in detention centers in Libya. The pullback practices are also shaped through the racial formations in the Libyan context. Racial formations in this context are structured through antiblackness, with roots reaching far beyond European colonialism. However, I focus on racial Europeanization when examining the entanglement of pullbacks and racial formations, given the fact that pullbacks are a mechanism resulting from and shaped through the European politics of externalizing its control of mobilities. I want to argue that European racial formations underlie pullbacks and are reinstating the racial line delineating the human from the human other through the construction of the European human and the non-European human other and through the association of meaning to these constructs. Part of this construction, but also as a result of the process of delineating the European human and the non-European human other, pullbacks are a means to produce the human other condition along ontological colonial lines and confine those constructed as the human other to this condition.

4.2.1. THE CONSTRUCTION OF WHITE INNOCENT EUROPE

In this chapter, I think along the shift from transmediterranean pushbacks to transmediterranean pullbacks and the entanglement of this shift with European white innocence. This innocence seems incompatible with transmediterranean deportations, thinking of the European responsibilities for

²⁰⁴ Traynor 2010.

pullbacks to Libya. Yet, the shift from pushbacks to pullbacks perpetuates European white innocence.

“Saving lives at sea and targeting criminal networks” reads the caption on the European Union's militarized operations on the Mediterranean.²⁰⁵ The title is in alignment with the presentation of the “disruption of the business model of human smuggling and human trafficking” as a means to protect migrants from traffickers.²⁰⁶ The European Union and European member states frame the strengthening of the European military capabilities and means to monitor transmediterranean mobilities as means to protect migrants. This concept of protection contains a misrepresentation of the causes for the dangers migrants encounter. It is forgotten, and to echo the concept of historical amnesia, it is actively forgotten, that the “business model of human smuggling and human trafficking” as the European Council calls it, is the result of the increasing control of migrant mobilities rather than a “business model” that is contained through this control. Thus, the control of transmediterranean mobilities is presented as a humanitarian act, against which the figure of the smuggler is constructed as the danger.

With the Italian authorities' admission of pushbacks in 2009, the presentation of Europe as protecting migrants in the Central Mediterranean began to crumble. It became too apparent that this practice was not about protecting migrants but about halting their mobilities at all costs: subjecting migrants to violence and torture in prisons in Libya, a well-known fact even in 2009. Thus, the complicities of European actors, in particular Italian actors, in the violence against migrants could no longer be ignored and criticism became louder. The reactions of European politicians were not absent. However, there has been neither a turn towards a politics of freedom of movement and legal and safe escape routes, which would put an end to this violence, nor to the adoption of search and rescue activities: It is true that Italy carried out a search and rescue mission in the form of Mare Nostrum in the following years, but it was abandoned soon after: “Italy has done its duty,”²⁰⁷ an official stated. In this chapter, I understand the European retreat from its direct presence in the Central Mediterranean as an attempt to meet this criticism and circumvent accusations of letting people drown and of participating in pushbacks to Libya. The European retreat into the air enabled Europe to conceal their responsibilities for deportations in the Central Mediterranean. However, the responsibilities are undeniable: Instead of acting themselves on their information gathered from the air, European actors share this information with the so-called Libyan Coast Guard, whom they have trained, financed and equipped, and thus coordinate the so-

²⁰⁵ European Council. n.d.

²⁰⁶ Tazzioli 2018, 5.

²⁰⁷ Associazione Antigone 2014.

called coast guard's actions on the basis of this information. Pullbacks instead of pushbacks. Still, Europe's white innocence remains intact.

In light of the brutalities of the pullbacks and the imprisonment under inhumane conditions after people are forced back to Libya, white innocence does not seem tenable. But the opposite is the case. White innocence is not alone maintained through the omission and active forgetting of the European responsibilities for the pullbacks to Libya. It is further reinforced through the brutalities of the pullbacks and the detention centers in Libya as Europe can present itself as the humanitarian counterpart to the Libyan other: European outrage against the atrocities unfolding during the pullbacks and in the detention centers renders white Europe more innocent, contrasted against the violent Libyan other. This outrage is structured through the detachment of European responsibilities for these brutalities and violence. For while European politicians time and again call for an end to the pullbacks and inhumane prison conditions in Libya, it is also European politicians that work on presenting these practices as a necessary evil and the continuation of the cooperation with Libya as a humanitarian task for Europe: “[w]e are fully aware that there is room for improvement in the cooperation established in 2017 with Libya, but figures [indicating the drop of the numbers of deaths along the central Mediterranean route] tell us that we have to keep working along this direction, rather than disengaging from the country,”²⁰⁸ the Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio is cited. Europe, as this statement implies, is not responsible for these brutalities, but can contribute to their end. This is a fig leaf, considering that the demands of the self-organized group *Refugees in Libya* to European politicians, actors and community remain unanswered. What remains is the construction of white innocent Europe.

White innocence, Wekker argues, arises, among other things, from the historical amnesia of colonial histories and their continuities.²⁰⁹ These continuities, in this thesis conceptualized as the continuation and re-inscription of the racial line delineating the human from the human other, and the mobilization of historical and contemporary associations, thus also underlie and are perpetuated through the practice of pullbacks. Europe's responsibilities for the inhumane atrocities in the Central Mediterranean is omitted. More than that, Europe is associated with humanitarianism, it presents itself as an actor that attempts to protect migrants and save lives. This humanitarian framing of the European bordering practice of pullbacks is in line with what the migration researchers Glenda Garelli and Martina Tazzioli framed as “the humanitarian war against migration

²⁰⁸ Barnes 2022.

²⁰⁹ Wekker 2016.

smugglers.”²¹⁰ Thus, the white innocence of Europe is reproduced and reinscribed, and attributed with European humanitarianism. But this form of humanitarian white innocence is not alone produced through the construction of humanitarian Europe in demarcation from the brutalities of the so-called Libyan Coast Guard, but also through the production of the people on the boats as the European other and the construction of this European other as a threat to Europe. This construction is also entangled with pullbacks, as I want to argue in the next sub-chapter.

4.2.2. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE THREATENING OTHER ON THE BOAT

The European responsibilities for the pullbacks to Libya and the concomitant atrocities are concealed. The fact that cooperation with those who are considered the responsible for these pullbacks is maintained gets justified with the need to control and halt transmediterranean migrant mobilities. This need is rooted in racial formations and processes of racialization, through which the non-European human other is constructed as a threat to Europe. In the following, I want to examine this process of racialization in more detail. The control of transmediterranean migrant mobilities is a means to control the crossing of administrative borders, and to halt these mobilities as soon as not only administrative borders but also the ontological colonial border are crossed. Following Du Bois’ concept of the global color line, the Central Mediterranean can thus be understood as being permeated by this global color line. The monitoring and control of transmediterranean mobilities, in particular pullbacks as a bordering practice, are instruments to dis/able mobilities along racial lines to maintain the global color line. Pullbacks, it seems, are based on the racial formations that determine the belonging to the white European human and are further embedded in and entangled with the construction of the threatening other on the boat.

The construction of migrants as the threatening human other, representing a threat to the white innocent Europe, is not a recent phenomenon. As early as the 1980s, the linking of migration and crime and terrorism could be noted in public debates, a linking that is omnipresent in today’s discourses as well. In these discourses, the migration researcher Claire Rodier demonstrates, the figure of the migrant becomes represented as a criminal, smuggler, invader, terrorist, it becomes a projection surface.²¹¹ These fears, which the manifold forms of the construction of the threatening human other evoke in white Europe, are further fueled by politicians: On the one hand, the human other is suitable as a scapegoat for domestic political problems in European states and the fears associated with them. On the other hand, politicians can use this fear to convince those belonging

²¹⁰ Garelli and Tazzioli 2017; the discussion of the emergence and construction of the figure of the human smuggler that is used to legitimize the European control of migrant mobilities is of relevance here, as it fuels the imaginary of the white innocent Europe that is protecting migrants from the often racialized figure of the human smuggler. However, I decided not to focus on this figure, as there is a vivid (academic) discussion ongoing on this figure, that I think needs more space and time to be included in its complexities.

²¹¹ Rodier 2015, 45.

to the white Europe, that everything is being done for their security.^{212, 213} Although it should be clear, I still want to point out that this security is a security for those who are constructed as humans alone and goes along with and is based on the insecurities for those who are constructed as human others. It is a racialized security.

The discursive conflation of migration and terrorism is reflected in Goldberg's description of the construction of the human being: The "human being is delineated in contrast to, in repulsion from, the creaturely or beastly that is taken always as a threat to 'us', to our well-being,"²¹⁴ a delineation that is structured along racial lines. This construction of the human in delineation from the human other as a threat, is rooted in colonial imaginaries, as the genesis of the human in decolonial thinking demonstrates. This construction and the meaning associated with it become apparent, among other things, in the construction of threatening Black masculinities that shine through again and again in the racist discourse that comes across as a discourse on migration.²¹⁵

This racist discourse is the basis for the militarization of migration control and the lethal politics in the Central Mediterranean. It is reflected in the arguing of European politicians calling for a further intensification of these politics but is also fueled by these politics: At the moment, there is an unbelievable extent of criminalization of migrants attempting to reach Europe. European authorities turn migrants into the figure of the smuggler and sentence them to many years of imprisonment in European jails. This mechanism culminates time and again in publicized court cases, but it is a common practice that reinscribes the use of migrants as a projection surface for the figure of the smuggler. One of the trials accompanied by media attention is the one against the El Hiblu 3, three young men arrested by the Maltese authorities as the leaders of resistance against the deportation to Libya and charged with several crimes, including terrorism.²¹⁶ This feeds into the construct of the terrorist migrant and further fosters this construct, giving ideological legitimacy to the pullbacks to Libya. For by charging the figure of the migrant with the meaning of threat, the global color line becomes not only an ontological line, but also a security line that must be defended at all costs.

²¹² Rodier 2015, 65.

²¹³ In addition to political actors, those who profit economically from the securitization of migration and the associated armament and militarization have a particular interest in maintaining discourses that legitimize such militarization. These include companies that arm European and non-European actors in migration and border control and produce the technological means to do so. But it also includes banks and investment firms that provide the financial capital for these vast sums of money invested in the war on migrants. For more information on this, there are some very interesting and insightful papers and books, including "Xenophobia Business" by Claire Rodier, the Border Business series by Mark Akkermann, and Lemberg-Pedersen's papers on Private Security Companies investing and invested in the European borderscapes.

²¹⁴ Goldberg 2006, 348.

²¹⁵ A defining moment in the current dominant discourse on migration was the media coverage of the events in Cologne in 2015, in which Black masculinities were constructed as the threatening other.

²¹⁶ Jakob 2020.

With the ontological colonial line becoming a line of security, fear becomes ascribed to migrant bodies. These bodies “henceforth become an object of fear,”²¹⁷ as Sara Ahmed puts it. Thus, the securitization of these fearsome bodies is concomitant with the process of “unsettling bonds of solidarity and humanity.”²¹⁸ The containment of the fear in bodies is creating emotional detachment and disengagement from these bodies, thus enabling the brutalities of the pullbacks and the conditions in Libya to be accepted. Thus, the production of the human other as threatening underlies the European politics in the Central Mediterranean, but it also is reproduced through this politics and the discourses that are enmeshed with it. Thus, the delineation of the human from the human other is in complex entanglement with practices such as pullbacks that maintain the global color line and attribute meanings to the human other.

4.3. THE HUMAN OTHER CONDITION

The human other condition, the conditions those considered to be the human other are subjected to, is both the consequence and an integral part of European migration control. It is a threat come true for all those who intend to cross not alone the administrative border but also the ontological colonial line. Transmediterranean deportations create a condition that is defined through the fact that migration control relies on the distinction between the human and the human other, and further reproduces and reinscribes this line. The European attempts to halt transmediterranean migrant mobilities renders the routes of those constructed as the human other and thus as non-belonging to Europe more and more dangerous. Transmediterranean deportations are further a practice that returns people to the inhumane conditions in Libya, in particular to the notorious detention centers and are thus creating the human other condition along racial lines.

4.3.1. TRANSMEDITERRANEAN DEPORTABILITIES AND THE HUMAN OTHER CONDITION

Those intercepted and returned to Libya attest to the violence concomitant to pullbacks to Libya: People report being shot at in their boats and beaten on board of the so-called Libyan coast guard,²¹⁹ and abuses “ranging from direct violence to damaging [...] boats and leaving those on them under the risk of drowning,”²²⁰ But transmediterranean deportations are not only violent in the moment of the actual deportation. Similar to what the concept of deportabilities captures, transmediterranean deportations are violent also in their potentialities, in their threat. However, the concept of deportabilities needs to be adapted to be applicable to the context of transmediterranean

²¹⁷ Ahmed 2004, 127.

²¹⁸ Basaran 2015, 215.

²¹⁹ Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor 2021, 17.

²²⁰ Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor 2021, 15.

deportations. Deportabilities, the condition of being liable to deportation, is in its original notion a concept that enables to approach this condition from an economic perspective and to recognize the structural intentionalities behind the production and maintenance of the condition of being deportable. In the context of transmediterranean deportations, an economic perspective is also possible, if one looks at how European companies and actors profit from the armament of the so-called Libyan Coast Guard,²²¹ and the profit that is made out of transmediterranean migration becoming more and more expensive and needing more and more attempts to succeed.²²² That said, I do not want to take an economic perspective here. Rather, I want to examine the production of human other condition in its entanglement with deportabilities, whereas I want to understand deportabilities in this case not as “the condition of being deportable” but as “the threat of being deported.” The stress on the threat shifts the focus: The focus here lies on the contribution of the mere threat of transmediterranean deportations to the creation of the human other condition in the Central Mediterranean. Nevertheless, it needs to be mentioned that the threat of deportations is of course not the sole factor rendering the Central Mediterranean in “a zone of violence, human rights abuses, disappearances and death.”²²³

European bordering practices, as it has been argued and demonstrated time and again, result in migration routes becoming more dangerous. This is also the case in the Central Mediterranean, where transmediterranean deportations, the menace of deportation, accompanies the route and structures migrant mobilities. It also affects the strategies of smugglers: “Smugglers started to plan many departures at the same time in order to overwhelm the LCG [so-called Libyan Coast Guard]. Unfortunately, such tactics create a greater risk for migrants, particularly in a context of decreased search and rescue in the Central Mediterranean and increased politicization of migration at the European level.”²²⁴ Thus, transmediterranean deportabilities, the threat of deportation, are thus contributing to the precariousness and the creation of the human other condition in the Central Mediterranean. That the threat of the deportation contributes to the human other condition, to the subjection of the human other to death, is also clear when one thinks of a pullback by the so-called Libyan Coast Guard that has been documented by Sea Watch. People jumped into the water to reach the European rescue ship. Some of them made it, some of the people did not make it and drowned in the sea. As testimonies of refugees having fled Libya, that “they would rather “die at sea” than to return to Libya,”²²⁵ indicate, the imminent threat of deportation creates the human other condition. This condition is structured along the lines delineating the human from the human

²²¹ See Akkermann 2019.

²²² See Malakooti 2019.

²²³ Alarmphone 2020.

²²⁴ Malakooti and Fall 2020, 115.

²²⁵ Ghoneim 2016.

other: For alone the human other is threatened through transmediterranean deportations and deportabilities.

4.3.2. TRANSMEDITERRANEAN DEPORTATIONS AND DETENTION CENTERS

Transmediterranean deportations maintain and create the human other condition also in Libya, since it is through transmediterranean deportations that people are forced back into the inhumane conditions from which they fled.²²⁶ “The increase in [...] interceptions at sea pushed up the number of migrants in detention in the country,”²²⁷ as most of those deported are brought in detention centers,²²⁸ sometimes run by the same authorities that conduct the pullbacks. Multiple forms of detention centers exist. Some are official, others under control of armed groups that might align or oppose the government.²²⁹ What those in charge of the detention centers seem to have in common is that most of those running or working in detention centers are linked to militias or are former militia and thus are connected to historical and present forms of exploitation.²³⁰ Thus, migrants, in particular Black migrants, report violence, torture, forced labor and death in detention centers in Libya. It must again be taken into account that the conditions differ along multiple factors and structural lines of distinction that intersect and create differentiated human other conditions.

As I write this chapter, I learn that a young person has taken his life in a detention center in Libya:

“Yesterday a 19y old MOHAMED MAHMOUD ABDULAZIZ hanged himself to death inside the [#Ainzara](#) dc. This comes after being forcibly evicted from gargaresh last year Oct then taken to [#Almabani](#) detention where he suffered all sorts of abuses [...] He cried loudly to the Libyan authorities, international community & to the fortress Europe, to be recognized, to have a voice & a face where his fundamental humans rights would be respected & protected but instead He was once again silenced [...]”²³¹

This obituary describes the circumstances in which this young man was forced to live. The conditions, I must mention here, are not alone the result from European racial formation, but are in line with antiblackness that has long histories in Libya. I do not address these histories here, as my focus lies on European responsibilities for transmediterranean deportations and deportabilities and for the maintenance of the conditions in Libya. In this obituary, these responsibilities are mentioned, as well as the resistance from migrants. The resistance is directed against the conditions migrants face in Libya and in the detention centers. It is further directed against the neglect by European and international actors and communities, against the structures of the human and the

²²⁶ The situation and the conditions that migrants, in particular Black migrants, are subjected to in war torn Libya are incredibly complex. The mentioning of detention centers in this thesis are not encompassing these centers in their entirety, and further, detention centers are only one aspect among many that shape the conditions migrants are subjected to in Libya.

²²⁷ Malakooti and Fall 2020, 104.

²²⁸ Malakooti 2019, 19.

²²⁹ Malakooti 2019, 26.

²³⁰ Malakooti 2019, 27.

²³¹ Refugees in Libya 2022.

human other: “He cried loudly to the Libyan authorities, international community & to the fortress Europe, to be recognized, to have a voice & a face.”

Those denounced and addressed did not react. However, the European responsibilities for the conditions in Libya and the neglect of those constructed as the human other are undeniable. The color line running through the Central Mediterranean and the racial formations inscribed into the European politics contain those constructed as the human other in inhumane conditions. Racial formations as a means of delineating the human from the human other and thus to rationalize exploitation and neglect, in other words the dehumanization along racial lines, are inherent in European border politics. Thus, the condition of the human other that is created through transmediterranean deportations and deportabilities are the responsibilities of Europe. Instead of assuming these responsibilities, as *Refugees in Libya* demand, European actors continue to create the human other condition and to confine those constructed as the non-European human other along racial lines to it and continue to neglect those constructed as the human other – and thus maintain the line delineating the human from the human other and the relations of domination that are structured and rationalized along the line demarcating the human from the human other.

4.4. CONCLUSION

In the last decade there has been a shift from transmediterranean pushbacks to pullbacks. The European responsibilities for transmediterranean deportations remain the same. This form of deportations is embedded in the broader European politics in the Central Mediterranean that subjects people along racial lines to the human other condition: a condition shaped through the construction of the human other along racial lines and the concomitant European neglect.

The shift from transmediterranean pushbacks to pullbacks is no coincidence. In this chapter, I illustrated this shift as an attempt to obscure European responsibilities and to reinforce the line delineating the human from the human other. More than that, this shift can be understood as an attempt to strengthen the construct of European white innocence: Through framing the European politics in the Central Mediterranean as a humanitarian response and fight against human smuggling and trafficking, the perception of Europe as the protector is produced. European white innocence is reinscribed. European white innocence is further strengthened through presentation of Libyan actors as the sole responsible for the atrocities concomitant to transmediterranean deportations. Against the image of the violent Libyan other, white Europe appears even more innocent.

However, not alone Libyan actors are presented as the threatening other. The transmediterranean deportation practice further relies on and reinscribes the construct of the threatening other on the boat from whom Europe needs to protect itself. The construction of the threatening other recalls the figure of the threatening other that underlies deportations and deportabilities in Switzerland and that is structured along colonial continuities. However, the meanings that are ascribed to the human other in and through transmediterranean deportations are different to those in the Swiss site of deportation: The human other on the boat is presented as the smuggler or attributed with terrorism. This figure, the containment of fear in the migrants' bodies, is produced in speeches of European politicians who argue for the continuation of European cooperation with the so-called Libyan coast guard. It is also implicitly constructed in and through the legal prosecution of people on boats as human smugglers and terrorists. The human other in this discourse threatens Europe – and thus the control of transmediterranean mobilities can be understood as a means to produce both the figure of the threatening human other and the white innocent European human.

Transmediterranean deportations are not alone a means to produce the imaginaries that support the lethal European politics in the Mediterranean. Transmediterranean deportations are also a means to produce the human other condition those deported and deportable are subjected to. Through transmediterranean deportations, those considered the threatening human other are subjected to violence and forced back into the inhuman conditions that dominate the situation of many migrants in Libya, in particular Black people. The human other conditions, however, are also created in the Central Mediterranean. Therefore, the concept of deportabilities is useful. In the Central Mediterranean context, I chose to focus on the threat rather than the liabilities of deportation. Centering the threat enables to theorize that not alone the actual deportation, but also the threat of it creates the human other condition: It is those constructed not alone as non-belonging but as threatening white innocent Europe that are subjected to the human other condition. I further want to note that the human other condition is not alone the consequence of but inherent in the European politics in the Central Mediterranean. On the one hand the human other condition, detached from European responsibilities and considered to be created through the violent Libyan other and the figure of the human smuggler, is mobilized to maintain European white innocence that again enables the politics of deterrence in the Central Mediterranean. On the other hand, the creation of the human other condition is intentional, as it is an actual threat to those who dare to cross the global color line and thus resist the structures of domination rooting in colonialism. And so, resistance is formed by people who are constructed as the human other, a resistance like that of *Refugees in Libya*, which is directed against European responsibilities for the human other conditions but also against Europe's racial formations and racisms that are inherent

in its politics in the Central Mediterranean and thus in transmediterranean deportations and deportabilities.

CHAPTER 5

DEPORTATION, DEPORTABILITY AND RACIAL FORMATIONS IN ALGERIA

The emergence and transformation of European migration control and its externalization lead to transmediterranean deportations in Europe's interest. In the Central Mediterranean, Europe is a direct participant in deportations through the cooperation of European actors with the so-called Libyan Coast Guard and its political, financial and technological support. However, the expansion of the deportation network goes further: In recent years, tens of thousands of people have been deported from Algeria to Niger.²³² These deportations are not a new phenomenon, however, the practice has intensified over the past few years. Europe's involvement in this intensification is not as evident and clear as in the Central Mediterranean. And yet, the increasing externalization of European migration control is a crucial factor that has exacerbated deportation practices in Algeria. Hence, one could assume that through the interconnection of European migration control and the intensification of the deportation practice in Algeria, European racial formations get entangled with deportations from Algeria – similar to the case of the transmediterranean deportations. This train of thought, as it becomes clear throughout this chapter, silences the existence of spatiotemporal particular racial formations in Algeria and leads to a Eurocentric perception of Algerian deportation practices.

To examine the entanglement of deportations, deportabilities and racial formations in Algeria, I outline in a first step the current Algerian deportation practice against the background of the externalization of European control of mobilities. I therefore contour moments of European externalization politics that contributed to the increase of deportations from Algeria, in particular to the neighboring state Niger. To then understand the entanglement of these interconnected deportation practices and racial formations, an exploration of the racial formations and their transformation in Algeria is required. I thus outline racial formations in Algeria in their historical configuration in order to understand the particularities of contemporary racial formations. This historicizing approach renders apparent that racial formations in Algeria have their own genealogies and that deportation practices cannot be seen as a consequence of the European externalization of migration control alone. In a third step, I zoom in on the current Algerian deportation practice and the condition of being liable to deportation that is connected to it, considering this practice and

²³² *Alarme Phone Sahara* n.d.

the resulting condition from a vantage point of the line delineating the human from the human other – and the redrawing of this line.

5.1. EXTERNALIZING EUROPEAN MIGRATION CONTROL, TRANSFORMING MOBILITIES

For centuries, multiple forms of trade crossed the Sahara. North African traders and those from regions south of the Sahara maintained close trade relations, creating social networks across the Sahara. These networks and trade routes continue to shape trans-Saharan mobilities until this day. The routes transformed and multiplied over the centuries and are getting more and more difficult to follow due to the increasing militarization of state borders. However, these pre-colonial trade routes are relevant for current migrations from sub-Saharan countries to Algeria.²³³

After the formal independence of Algeria in 1962, more people emigrated from than immigrated into the country. At some point, the predominance of emigration transformed into the predominance of immigration to Algeria. After Moroccan troops occupied large parts of Western Sahara in 1975, thousands of Sahrawis fled to Algeria and settled in camps where people continue to live until today. In this unresolved conflict, the Algerian government continues to support the Sahrawis and the Frente Polisario, the liberation organization of Western Sahara.²³⁴ This support strains the relation between the Algerian and Moroccan state, a conflict that becomes relevant for both countries' deportation practices, as we will see later. In the 1990s, more and more people fled from environmental disasters, political and economic crises and wars in countries south of the Sahara. Algeria has furthermore been a destination for students, in particular students from francophone West African countries moving to Algeria for their studies at renowned Algerian universities.²³⁵ Not least, the North African country has become a destination for (seasonal) labor migration. In addition to these forms of migration to Algeria, people heading to Europe transit Algeria, given this countries' geographic location at the Western Mediterranean Sea.

Despite these multi-faceted and multi-layered migration patterns to Algeria, the predominant European narrative has portrayed the increase of migration to Algeria in the 1990s as transit migration, with Europe as the final destination. Since the end of the last century, the European Union and European member states are doing their utmost to ensure that people travelling and fleeing do not reach the European external borders, or rather do not get to North African countries

²³³ Bensaâd 2002

²³⁴ Jamaï and Mohsen-Finan 2021.

²³⁵ Naceur 2020.

such as Algeria in the first place.²³⁶ Thus, even though European externalization politics do not correspond to the complexities of migration patterns, this politics is shaping these migration patterns according to European interests.

The externalization of European control of mobilities describes the increasing expansion of the border into non-European states. In an introduction to the concept externalization Mechthild Baumann summarizes aptly: “externalization: from line to space, from entry to exit control.”²³⁷ This is linked to the increasing outsourcing of migration control through cooperation with third countries, but also with international actors. The image I find most accurate is that of a web of surveillance, controls and militarization that is becoming ever more tightly knit and far-reaching, spanning far beyond Europe’s external borders. The concrete configuration of this web does not seem to me to be of relevance here. What is relevant, however, is the realization that through this close-meshed web of controls and surveillance, mobilities are controlled along European interests not alone at external European borders and in European states but also in third countries. The migration routes to Europa are becoming more and more dangerous, both for those migrating to Europe and for those following other migration patterns – the same applies to those in and from Algeria. The perilousness of migration is linked to the transformation of deportation practice in Algeria. In order to understand this transformation, one must consider the influence of European externalization practices on mobilities in and around Algeria. Once more, I cannot paint a comprehensive picture of this transformation, given the complexities and multiplicities of the mechanisms and processes of the externalization of European migration control. Rather, I intend to provide an insight into and highlight some of the cornerstones of the externalization that are significant for the transformation of Algerian deportation practices.

5.1.1. EXTERNALIZATION POLITICS AND ALGERIAN DEPORTATION

The European externalization politics lead to the control of mobilities in the interest of Europe at its external borders and beyond. The increasing control and surveillance rendered migration more dangerous, more expensive and more time-consuming. People are more and more blocked in states that are transit states to them, as has happened in Algeria due to the tighter control of the countries northern borders. In response, the Algerian state has begun to monitor its southern borders more closely and to expand deportation practices. European border control is thus shifting further south

²³⁶ This can be illustrated, for instance, when considering law 15-08 in Niger. This law criminalizes all forms of support for cross-border mobilities and has de-facto led to the criminalization of migration. It was introduced in 2015 under heavy pressure from the EU and is accompanied by European financial and military support for the Nigerien state to introduce corresponding surveillance and control structures in a country where, before the introduction of the 08-15 law, in certain areas more than half of the inhabitants lived from the then legal travelling infrastructure.

²³⁷ Baumann 2014.

and Algeria is becoming a “guardian for the border regime of the European Union states.”²³⁸ This position might have positive implications for the Algerian government in future negotiations with European state actors, as the Niger-based activist organization *Alarme Phone Sahara* noticed.²³⁹ In order to illustrate the extent to which European migration politics is interwoven with the intensification of Algerian deportation practice, I want to outline two cornerstones of externalization: I once again touch upon transmediterranean deportations and I further demonstrate how the control of the Spanish-Moroccan border has led to an increase in deportations from Morocco to Algeria – and this, in turn, has prompted an increase in deportations from Algeria.

One cornerstone of the externalization that is relevant to understand the increase of deportations from Algeria is the European financial, technological and political support of the so-called Libyan coast guard and the transmediterranean deportations connected to this support. People attempting to reach European shores are turning to Algeria to circumvent the dangers they are exposed to on the route via Libya. The Algerian government met the increase in migrants in Algeria with deportations.

Another development that indicates that Algerian deportation practices are to be considered in the context of the externalization of European migration control is the cooperation between the Spanish and Moroccan state in questions of migration politics. This cooperation began soon after the introduction of visa requirements for Moroccan nationals in 1991. In this time, the two states began to militarize their land borders at the Spanish exclaves Ceuta and Melilla and to surveil the maritime borders; with financial and political support, Moroccan forces took over the control of migration in the interests of the Spanish state and the European Union. In addition to the militarization of their border, the Spanish and Moroccan states further concluded a readmission agreement to facilitate the deportation of those people who nevertheless cross the border. In addition to these formalized deportations, Spanish border forces also push people back to Morocco immediately after they crossed the border, through doors in the fences: A deportation practice that has been declared legal by a Spanish court ruling in 2015.²⁴⁰ Because of the tightened control of the borders between Morocco and Spain, less people manage to cross the border into Spain, and more people intending to cross the European external border are blocked in Morocco. What followed was the start of illegal deportations from Morocco to Algeria.²⁴¹ These deportations were met with

²³⁸ *Alarme Phone Sahara* 2020.

²³⁹ *Alarme Phone Sahara* 2022.

²⁴⁰ Barfuss and Vöhl 2022.

²⁴¹ Ouhemmou 2021.

further deportations, this time through the hands of Algerian forces. Algerian authorities arrested people deported from Morocco while they were still in the border area and deported them back to Morocco, without an agreement with the Moroccan state.

However, deportations from Algeria were not limited to the border with Morocco. People were also deported to Niger and Mali. These deportations were not formalized through readmission agreements and the Algerian legislation regulating deportations has remained unchanged from Algeria's independence until 2008. Since the inception of the outsourcing of the European control of mobilities, however, the Algerian state has tightened the legal basis for its deportation practice. In 2008, the law 08-11 has been introduced that criminalizes irregular migration and imposes a prison sentence of up to two years for it. Further, the law specifies that someone being in the country without authorization can be expelled with a notice of 48 hours until 15 days: Once informed by the authorities, the person concerned can appeal.²⁴² In the event of noncompliance with a expulsion order, imprisonment of up to five years can be imposed.²⁴³ In 2009, another law was adopted that established the criminal offence of illegal departure. Both Algerian and non-Algerian nationals can be prosecuted for illegal departure. This law is perfectly in line with the European interest of halting mobilities at the European external border and with the racial formations that structure this interest – thus, one could state that European racial formations entered the Algerian legislation that creates the criminal offence of illegal departure.

With these laws, the legal framework for current Algerian deportation politics has been laid. This framework has been further transformed with the conclusion of a readmission agreement between the Algerian and Nigerien state in 2014. With this agreement, the Nigerien state commits to readmitting Nigerien nationals. Just after the conclusion of this agreement, deportations took place only sporadically. But in 2017 deportations increased. Nigerien nationals were deported in large numbers, but the agreement was also used to deport people without Nigerien citizenship to Niger. Deportations thus took place on both legal and illegal ground. Thus, the legal framework cannot be used for a sound understanding of the deportation practice in Algeria and its increase in 2017. As I argue in this thesis, examining deportations in their entanglement with racial formations can create an understanding of the extent to which deportations are an expression and a means of maintaining relations of domination. To create a more nuanced understanding of the connection between deportations and relations of domination, I examine the entanglement of the Algerian

²⁴² Amnesty International 2018, 6.

²⁴³ Amnesty International 2018, 3.

deportation practice with racial formations. Therefore, an account of the formation and transformation of racial formations in Algeria needs to be established.

5.2. GENEALOGIES OF RACIAL FORMATIONS IN ALGERIA

Racial formations do not precede dominant social conditions but are formed in and through these conditions. Examining the entanglement of racial formations with deportation practices thus requires an understanding of racial formations in their particular dominant social conditions. In this paragraph, I intend to elaborate such an understanding through a historical lens and trace the genealogies of Algerian racial formations. Therefore, I compile the information on the formation and transformation of racial formations accessible to me in order to situate contemporary racial formations and practices in their temporal and spatial continuities. Including the genealogies also seems relevant to me since the theorization of race I am working with goes back to thinkers who locate the creation of race in European colonialism – and one of the central arguments that comes up in tracing the genealogies of Algerian racial formations is that race in Algeria is not a relic of European colonialism alone.²⁴⁴ Rather, one has to turn to the histories of the Arab empire and the Arab-Berber trade to understand the formation and transformation of racial formations.²⁴⁵

The anthropologist Tidiane N'Diaye outlines that in the sixth century, mass enslavement began with the expansion of the Arab-Islamic empire. Large numbers of people from regions south of the Sahara were enslaved and traded across the Sahara.²⁴⁶ In its initial period, religion was sometimes used to justify the enslavement and slave trade.²⁴⁷ But with the imperial expansion of the Arab-Islamic empire, Islam expanded as well. The spread of Islam into regions from which people had been enslaved required a new rationale to delineate the free from the unfree. Theories of climatization functioned as this new rationale. These theories served to create a correlation between climatic conditions and intelligence in order to rationalize the subordination of enslaved people.²⁴⁸ In the transformation of the rationales delineating the free from the unfree, an increasing naturalization occurred – from a religious justification of inferiority to a justification under the guise of natural science, similar to the creation of race as a mechanism “to naturalize the groupings that it identifies in its own name.”²⁴⁹ This grouping was expressed in terms of a patrilineal Arab

²⁴⁴ Sadai 2021, 133.

²⁴⁵ Sadai 2021, 133.

²⁴⁶ Hahonou 2021, 41.

²⁴⁷ King 2019.

²⁴⁸ King 2019, 8.

²⁴⁹ Goldberg 1992, 559.

origin, rendering the line of delineation into a line referring to Arab descent.²⁵⁰ The ones belonging, thus, were those with Arab descent.

The line delineating the free from the unfree served to maintain a trans-Saharan slave system that assumed a central role in the economic and sociopolitical structures of the Arab-Islamic Empire.²⁵¹ Therefore, the social conditions and their transformations are important to consider: Slave labor assumed different forms in the Sahara and north of the Sahara, its function for the economic structures differed according to the region. In the Sahara and the southern areas of today's North African states, a form of slave labor emerged that is reminiscent of the dehumanizing exploitation in chattel slavery under European colonialism.²⁵² It took on a central role in the economic structure of the region. In regions more in the north, slave labor assumed a less central function for local economies. The dominant form of slave labor was domestic slavery; enslaved people were exploited as household servants and forced into concubinage.²⁵³ These concubinages, though their enforced character is not meant to be denied, served some women to improve their position in society. The children of women enslaved in a concubinage became free people along the lines of patrilineal Arab descent.²⁵⁴ Some slaves assumed the function of armed guards of rulers in order to protect and support their power.²⁵⁵ The line between the free and the unfree, the Arab and the non-Arab seems, at least in the northern regions, is not drawn as sharply as it has been in and through European colonialism. The denial of Black humanity, as King calls it in relation to the transatlantic slave trade, is not as clearly and deeply inscribed in the slave trade in historical North Africa.²⁵⁶ However, "the notion of the permanent slave status of Black Africans [has] already [been] deeply engrained in the Maghreb."^{257, 258}

The association of Blackness and enslavement persists until this day. Eric Hahonou notes that "race formation in the region is intimately related to the history of slavery and its memorization."²⁵⁹ This also shows in Célia Sadai's demonstration that contemporary terminologies in the Maghreb express a system that positions white people in opposition to Black people, white people being referred to as free, while Black people are being referred to as slaves,²⁶⁰ as "*khadim* (servant), *ouacif*

²⁵⁰ Akrimi 2021, 2.

²⁵¹ Hahonou 2021, 41.

²⁵² King 2019, 17.

²⁵³ King 2021, 35.

²⁵⁴ Akrimi 2021, 2.

²⁵⁵ King 2019, 12.

²⁵⁶ King 2019, 10.

²⁵⁷ King 2019, 10.

²⁵⁸ That this idea is rooted in the Maghreb is not unsurprising. After all, in the Arab-Islamic empire, not only people from sub-Saharan but also white people from European areas were enslaved. Nonetheless, being Black is associated with slave status, whereas whiteness is not. The reasons for the omission of this form of slavery, as Eric Hahonou (2021) notes, is not clear. One of his assumptions is that with European colonialism a relation of domination spread and with it, white supremacist ideologies that rendered the association of whiteness and subordination unthinkable.

²⁵⁹ Hahonou 2021, 41.

²⁶⁰ Sadai 2021, 131.

(domestic slave), *‘abd* (slave), *haratine* (freed slave).”²⁶¹ This association thus still informs antiblack racism in Algeria, including the gendered forms enslavement took: On the one hand, King depicts that the memories of Black guards and soldiers that protect those in power, sometimes from the local populations, are contributing to current forms of antiblack racisms in the region.²⁶² On the other hand, he outlines that the term *kbadim* (servant) is used in particular to refer to Black women,²⁶³ and Ali Bensaâd points out the association of Black women and sex work in the dominant discourse in Algeria today, relating it to the concubinage mentioned above.²⁶⁴ This does not mean that these references and associations are a direct consequence of gendered enslavement in the Arab-Islamic empire. However, considering continuities as “implying neither causality nor finality, but instead open-ended processes,”²⁶⁵ I argue that there are continuities in historical and contemporary racial formations. Thus one can state that the contemporary racial formations in Algeria root in long histories of antiblackness that rationalized the delineation of the human from the human other, the free from the unfree, in order to support and maintain the relations of domination – and to rationalize the mass deportations to Niger.

The long histories of antiblackness and their continuities are rarely addressed in the dominant discourse in Algeria. Enslavement is in the broad public a taboo topic, as Célia Sadai describes it. This taboo is not limited to historical forms of oppression but also to contemporary forms of antiblack racisms. Racisms are imagined to be external to Algeria in the dominant discourse,²⁶⁶ as well as blackness itself. Black people are often not understood to be part of the Algerian population, Black Algerians seldom present in the dominant self-representation of Algeria. Rather, belonging, being Algerian, is constructed in delimitation to blackness.²⁶⁷ Blackness, in the broader Maghrebian context “is often opposed to Arabness.”²⁶⁸ This opposition, as Hahonou points out, is rooted in the trans-Saharan slave trade,²⁶⁹ Black people are imagined as originating from regions south of the Sahara, not as being Arabs.

Even though the externalization of blackness and antiblack racism has its roots in the specific spatial context, this externalization is reminiscent of El-Tayeb’s discussion of European self-representation and of European white innocence. Thus, one could argue that a mechanism similar to the colonial amnesia in contemporary Europe is also operating in contemporary Algeria. But

²⁶¹ Khiat and King 2021, 6.

²⁶² King 2019, 12.

²⁶³ King 2019, 32.

²⁶⁴ Bensaâd 2002, 46.

²⁶⁵ Lemberg-Pedersen 2019.

²⁶⁶ Sadai 2021.

²⁶⁷ Hahonou 2021, 42.

²⁶⁸ Hahonou 2021, 42.

²⁶⁹ Hahonou 2021, 45.

while European colonial amnesia is linked to the construction of white innocence, to the active practice of veiling one's involvement in colonialism and its continuities, the rationale behind this amnesia in the Algerian context must be a different one – given that Algeria has been colonized and has not gained formal independence until 1962, after a long and strenuous war of independence. This anti- and decolonial fight for independence is important for the externalization of racisms and blackness: Historians demonstrate that the anticolonial fight has become an important aspect in the Algerian self-perception. In anti- and decolonial commemorative culture, pre-colonial histories are not as central as anti-colonial resistance, and thus the centuries of enslavement of Black people are omitted.²⁷⁰ The antiblack amnesia, as I understand it, is not based on the active forgetting of European colonialism, but on the active remembrance of European colonialism and the resistance to it, a remembrance that might be disrupted through memories of one's own involvement in oppression. Thus blackness and (antiblack) racism seem to be externalized in Europe as well as in Algeria. This externalization is based on a similar mechanism, but the parameters are opposite: One is based on active forgetting, one on active remembering of European colonialism. Similar as El-Tayeb argues in relation to Europe, blackness and antiblack racism is thus not recognized as an operating formation in Algeria.

And yet race is operating, not least in the context of deportations of Black people. In the following, I examine the spatial and temporal specific racial formations in their entanglement with Algerian deportation practices and deportabilities. Even though the formation and transformations of racial formations in Algeria are distinct from those created in and through European colonialism, I chose to adopt a conceptualization of race that has been theorized in terms of its formation in and through European colonialism also in relation to the Algerian deportation practice: race as delineating those belonging from those non-belonging, as delineating the human from the human other. This choice is on the one hand based on a conceptual consideration: Racial formations, as Goldberg denotes through the concept of racial regionalization, are not static. Rather, they transform, “circulate, cross borders, shore up existing or prompt new ones.”²⁷¹ In light of this circulation of racial formations, it seems reasonable to adopt a conceptualization of race that is related to the creation of race through European colonialism also in the Algerian context. On the one hand, because race as a line delineating the human and the human other has circulated and spread with European colonialism and has thus also reached Algeria, considering the colonization of Algeria. On the other hand, because this line delineating the human and the human other is subject to a relation of domination that operates on a global scale until this day: coloniality.²⁷²

²⁷⁰ Sadai 2021, 136, own translation.

²⁷¹ Goldberg 2009a, 1274.

²⁷² Maldonado-Torres 2007, 244.

Borders are functional to these relations of domination, borders function as a global color line²⁷³ that is not only drawn across geography, but also inscribed into bodies.²⁷⁴ The borders in Algeria also maintain a color line, and are thus entangled with the racial formation underlying the relations of domination that emerged in and through European colonialism – in particular, as with European migration control also the rationales behind this control are outsourced. Thus, I argue that the deportation practice in Algeria is also based on a line of delineating the human from the human other that is inscribed into bodies and renders them deportable. Beyond these conceptual considerations, I think it is appropriate also for empirical reasons to use the conceptualization of race as delineating the human from the human other to examine deportations in the Algerian context, as it will become apparent considering the witness reports of people being deported and being deportable.

5.3. RACIALIZATION AND DEPORTATION IN THE WAKE OF 2017

Keeping the genealogies of racial formations in mind, I am about to focus on the mass arrests and mass deportations in Algeria that started in 2017. In October 2017 a journalist's blog held that, “[w]hether the wave of arrests is a sign of a permanent tightening of state repression against immigrants in the country [remains] questionable. [...] Under Ouyahia, Algeria is experiencing a significant rightward ripple, and immigrants must prepare for a tougher stance by the authorities.”²⁷⁵ The premonition that migrants needed to be prepared for a tougher stance by the government has become confirmed in the meantime. Moreover, one could also formulate an answer to the journalist's question: It was not a temporary practice but one that has continued ever since as the activist organization *Alarme Phone Sahara*, based in Niger, has been documenting since its inception on a large scale.²⁷⁶

In the following, I examine the extent to which the Algerian deportation practice is based on the racial delineation of the human from the human other in its specific spatial and temporal formation: I examine the discursive formations that accompanied the mass arrests and mass deportations. Furthermore, it will be shown that the distinction between being Algerian and blackness underlies deportations, but that deportations are also a means to inscribe this distinction into bodies and to create a condition that can be understood along the lines of the coloniality of being.

²⁷³ Du Bois 1903, 3.

²⁷⁴ Benyera 2019, 15.

²⁷⁵ Naceur 2017.

²⁷⁶ *Alarme Phone Sahara*, n.d.

5.3.1. RACIALIZED AND RACIALIZING DISCOURSE

At the time mass arrests and deportations had been initiated in 2017, a growing racist sentiment was pre-eminent in dominant media as well as in the political discourse in Algeria. The journalist Yasmina Allouche calls it an anti-immigrant hysteria,²⁷⁷ that resembles the “violent and dehumanizing language that has often preceded ethnic cleansing, genocide, or race-based expulsions.”²⁷⁸ This dehumanizing hysteria, however, is not new. Even though it only took on such proportions in 2017 that Allouche calls it hysteria, the anti-immigrant discourse roots in and reproduces long-standing racial formations and attributions to these racial formations. For this discourse veils the antiblackness that underlies it.

The antiblackness can be located in the formation and transformation of racial formations in the Maghreb. The continuities of racial formations become evident in the dominant association of Black women with sex work. This association reminds of the enslavement of Black women in concubinage during the times of slavery in the Maghreb and has been mobilized in anti-immigrant hysteria and later even in jurisprudence: There is a report of an arrest of about 70 Black people who were detained and later collectively convicted for “illegal entry into Algerian territory” and the women furthermore for “prostitution.”²⁷⁹ This judgment relies on and mobilizes longstanding gendered racial formations in order to deport Black people. Thus, racial formations are inherent in this judgement.

However, this judgment and the anti-immigrant discourse are not alone rooted in these racial formations but are further a means of attributing meanings to racial formations and of fueling antiblackness. In the dominant discourse, immigrants are depicted as originators of crime, drugs and diseases, as bringing them into the country.²⁸⁰ In relation to the externalization of blackness, the association is less between crime and immigrants, but between crime and blackness. Furthermore, the racial delineation has been reinscribed through sensationalist reporting. In mainstream media, a particular representation of Black people was spread: Pictures of Black people in “squalid camps around the capital”²⁸¹ filled the front pages of newspapers. This sensationalist reporting happened also during the time mass deportations were taken up. The first mass arrests were highly publicized and publicly disseminated.²⁸² I interpret this publicization as a means of constructing and circulating the image of the criminal Black other. It was also politicians mobilizing

²⁷⁷ Allouche 2017.

²⁷⁸ Bouknight 2018.

²⁷⁹ Human Rights Watch 2018.

²⁸⁰ Naceur 2017.

²⁸¹ Allouche 2017.

²⁸² Allouche 2017.

this images for the 2017 elections drew nearer as economic conditions grew tougher. Trough antiblack discourse, immigrants became scapegoats for the deteriorating conditions of the Algerian economy. This allowed politicians to hide their own political failures,²⁸³ and to present a simple solution to the deteriorating economic conditions: the deportation of Black people.

5.3.2. RACIALIZED AND RACIALIZING (NON)BELONGING

The official version is that the controls and mass arrests that precede deportations are based on suspicion of illegal residence in Algeria. The version that is widespread among the people affected, activist groups and (international) non-governmental organizations, is different: Suspicion of illegal residence in the country is based on racial formations and socio-economic conditions. Thus, the mass arrests were “based on their skin color instead of an individual assessment of their cases.” Based on testimonies, Amnesty International states that “the security forces reportedly resorted to ethnic profiling, based on the color of the skin or the supposed origin of the persons.”²⁸⁴ This is in line with the spatial and temporal specific construction of blackness as the non-belonging in the Maghreb. Non-belonging is not based on nationalities and residence permits but on racial delineations, in line with the externalization of blackness. Blackness is not recognized as being Algerian but is constructed as the other to the Algerian, being Algerian is constructed through the distinction from blackness. Moreover, the arrests and deportations are not only an expression of this self-representation but reproduce it again and again, since borders stick to bodies, as Benyera demonstrates.²⁸⁵ The borders that stick to bodies are not administrative lines, but rather ontological lines. This has an effect on the racial structures of societies as a whole and results in the denial of belonging of all people who are constructed as the other to being Algerian – regardless of their legal status or nationalities.

However, testimonies from those arrested suggest that the arrests cannot be reduced to skin color alone, but that the socio-economic position is not insignificant for the suspicion of illegal residence in Algeria. People are arrested in their homes, but often also at their places of work. Construction sites where Black people are exploited are often a site of mass arrests because sometimes people work and sleep there.²⁸⁶ “The authorities know everything, where the ‘Blacks’ work, where the ‘Blacks’ live,”²⁸⁷ and use this knowledge to raid areas where many Black people live. This seems to be a form of racial profiling that is organized along racial and socio-economic lines of delineation. Belonging is thus questioned along racial and socio-economic lines, lines that cannot be considered

²⁸³ Allouche 2017.

²⁸⁴ Amnesty International 2018, 7.

²⁸⁵ Benyera 2019, 15.

²⁸⁶ Personal conversation

²⁸⁷ Poulet 2020, own translation.

in isolation from each other as the construction of the human other condition along racial lines indicates.

The fact that deportations are about racial formations becomes also rampant considering the legal procedure after an arrest. People suspected of illegal residence are in most cases not given an assessment of their individual cases or vulnerabilities, as stipulated in national legislation and international treaties.²⁸⁸ Rather, collective judgments are made.²⁸⁹ These collective judgments lead to the sentencing of people regardless of their legal status and individual situation in order to make them legally deportable. Thus, people in different situations are rendered deportable: It includes people whose stay has been illegalized, others who are transiting Algeria, and some who have been living and working in Algeria for years. It also includes people who hold a valid visa.²⁹⁰ Furthermore, it also includes people who have been recognized as refugees. This is also due to the legal situation in Algeria. Some 50 years after the ratification of the Geneva Convention on Refugees, the Algerian state has still not established an asylum law framework. Instead of the state, it is the UNHCR that registers asylum seekers and decides on refugee status. However, this decision is not automatically recognized by the Algerian state and does not confer any right of residence in Algeria.²⁹¹ Thus, it is not surprising that recognized refugees from Algeria are also deported. I mention all this to make clear that deportations as well as deportabilities are based upon a racial basis: Belonging and non-belonging are a racial question.

The fact that deportations are based on race seems to become even clearer considering the following aspect: People are deported to Niger regardless of their so-called country of origin. The Niger-based activist organization *Alarme Phone Sahara* reports that in addition to the official deportations of Nigerien citizens regulated by the readmission agreement, there are also unofficial deportation convoys. In these convoys, people with other citizenships are deported to Niger. Given that both mass arrests and deportation decisions are made on a racial basis, it becomes also apparent in the unofficial convoys to Niger that blackness, then, stands above national belonging when it comes to negotiating non-belonging to Algerian society. And thus, the construction of being Algerian is also done through the demarcation of blackness. It seems not to be about the nationality but about being black, about racial formations. This conclusion can be further supported by considering how blackness has historically been the yardstick to measure belonging and against which being Algerian has been constructed. Blackness is therefore not only the ground

²⁸⁸ Human Rights Watch 2018.

²⁸⁹ *Inside Arabia* 2018.

²⁹⁰ Wotler and Sertain 2019.

²⁹¹ Amnesty International 2018, 3.

for the suspicion of non-belonging and the ground for the legal decision to deport, but blackness also represents the pillar against which national belonging is constructed. Thus, blackness again becomes the other, race the line of delineation of the belonging from the non-belonging that is maintained through the practice of deportations and deportabilities.

5.3.3. THE HUMAN OTHER CONDITION

Following decolonial theories such as those of thinkers like Wynter and Maldonado-Torres, race as the line delineating the belonging from the non-belonging also represents the line delineating the human from the human other. To what extent this conceptualization of race as a mechanism of delineating the human from the human other is also fruitful in the Algerian context is what I explore in the following. I therefore examine whether the delineation of the belonging from the non-belonging that underlies deportations can be seen as related, if not consistent, with the delineation of the human from the human other. I therefore explore the extent to which deportations are a means to reproduce the construction of the human and the human other and accordingly, the human other condition. In order to argue that the line delineating the belonging from the non-belonging coincides with the ontological colonial line, I want to demonstrate the production of the human other condition in and through deportations and the condition of being liable to deportations.

Being liable to deportation, a condition that is shaped along racial lines, has far-reaching consequences for those being confined to this condition. A person endangered of deportation states: “When there are these waves of arrests, it is a psychosis.”²⁹² The construction of the non-belonging has material consequences for the realities of those deportable. These consequences, pinpointed in this testimony at the mental level, affect other areas as well. This shows in the statement of another, illegalized person: “I have no passport, no papers, I live in a construction site, and I have to avoid the police.”²⁹³ The fact that this person considered non-belonging has to avoid the police leads, similar to the Swiss context, to the deprivation of the right to rights: The police represents a threat, puts those considered non belonging at risk of deportations, and thus this institution cannot be called upon to enforce one’s rights. One report that illustrates this in its cruelty is a case of multiple rape in which the woman concerned turned to the Algerian authorities. She was turned away because she had no papers, because she was illegalized.²⁹⁴

²⁹² Poulet 2020, own translation

²⁹³ Poulet 2020, own translation

²⁹⁴ Daoud in: *jeune afrique*: 16.05.2019.

Thus, the condition of being deportable means that a person cannot realize their claim to rights, is disenfranchised and becomes further exploitable and profitable for economic profit. This profit, it seems to me, corresponds to the machine of inclusion that Gargi Bhattacharyya has theorized.²⁹⁵ This machine of inclusion supports national economies, as discussed in the context of Switzerland. Although referring to deportabilities in Libya, the production of profitable bodies is summed up in the manifesto of *Refugees in Libya*: “Here we became the hidden workforce of the Libyan economy.”²⁹⁶ However, it is not alone national economies that benefit from this inclusion machine, but also the individuals arresting and imprisoning those rendered deportable. It has been reported time and again that the Algerian authorities steal people’s belongings during the arrests. This ranges “from not being allowed to collect wages owed them to confiscation of phones and sometimes meager savings during arrest. For many of them, these possessions were never returned, despite promises from the security forces to return them when they reached the Tamanrasset²⁹⁷ detention center.”²⁹⁸ People are thus exploited, in full consciousness of them being de facto disenfranchised. The disenfranchisement created in and through the condition of being deportable suggests that the line delineating the belonging from the non-belonging is also an ontological line, delineating the possessing from the dispossessed, the human from the human other.

This delineation of the human from the human other also becomes apparent when looking at the actual process of deportation, including the mass arrests and the inhumane conditions in which people are subsequently detained. Witnesses report that police or military police officers search people in their homes, sometimes breaking down doors to enter,²⁹⁹ and beating those resisting.³⁰⁰ After arrests, people are held in detention centers, sometimes for weeks or even months. There are reports of insanitary conditions, of violence and even torture by the Algerian forces.³⁰¹ This violence continues in the convoys to Niger. I have not found information about official deportations to Assamaka, but the unofficial ones seem to be violent: Witnesses reported beatings as people are crammed into buses or trucks.³⁰² At Point Zero, a location right on the Algerian-Nigerien border in the Algerian Sahara, people are abandoned and prevented at gunpoint from turning back to Algeria. People are forced to make their way on foot, usually without water or food, to the nearest Nigerien town, which is at least 15 kilometers across the desert from Point Zero. One witness reports that “some people couldn't go on. They sat down and we left them behind.

²⁹⁵ Bhattacharyya 2018, 73.

²⁹⁶ *Refugees in Libya* 2021.

²⁹⁷ Tamanrasset is an Algerian town near the Nigerien border. Near Tamanrasset there are one or more detention centers, sometimes described as shipping containers, where arrested people are taken and held in detention until a deportation convoy leaves for the Niger border.

²⁹⁸ Human Rights Watch 2018.

²⁹⁹ Info Migrants rédaction 2021.

³⁰⁰ Médecins Sans Frontières 2021.

³⁰¹ Médecins Sans Frontières 2021

³⁰² Farrah 2020, 38.

They were in too much pain.”³⁰³ Some do not survive the march; people report passing dead bodies on their path through the desert.³⁰⁴

After this description of blatant violence against those non-belonging, I can think of nothing else than to state that the line delineating the belonging from the non-belonging is an ontological line delineating the human from the human other. This statement is guided by emotion, by anger and sadness over such inhuman treatment. And yet, it seems to me, that this emotional judgment can also be made on the basis of the theorizations of race as an ontological line delineating the human from the human other.

5.4. CONCLUSION

The Algerian deportation practice is based on race as a line delineating the human from the human other and is further redrawing this line. On the one hand, my argument is based on a historical contextualization of this line in the enslavement of Black people in what is today known as the Maghreb. Racial formations are still shaped through these histories, as one can see considering the colonial imaginaries and meanings that are ascribed to blackness. Furthermore, one can recognize the colonial roots of contemporary racial formations considering the construction of being Algerian in distinction to blackness, thus, the externalization of blackness from the imaginaries of being Algerian. Not alone blackness but also antiblackness is externalized from the dominant Algerian self-understanding, similar to the European context. This is to be understood in the context of European colonialism: the omission of antiblackness enables a self-understanding that is connected to the Algerian liberation struggle. Thus, racial formations are not based on the active forgetting, but the active remembering of European colonialism.

Similar to the European context, in the dominant discourse of contemporary Algeria, antiblackness is seldom made explicit. Rather, antiblackness is veiled in anti-immigrant discourses based on the fact that blackness is presented as the other and charged with corresponding meanings. Thus, deportations are a practice rooted in the demarcation of blackness as the other. Blackness, as in the human other, becomes therewith the indication of being deportable. Deportations, however, are not only rooted in the dehumanization inherent in racial formations but reinscribe and reshape racial formations. In line with the notion of the color line,³⁰⁵ deportations is a practice that serves to uphold the color line between those belonging and non-belonging, between those belonging to

³⁰³ Wotler and Sertain 2019.

³⁰⁴ Wotler and Sertain 2019.

³⁰⁵ Du Bois 1903, 3.

the human from the human other. For those who crossed the administrative borders, the border remains inscribed into their bodies.³⁰⁶ The otherness remains visible – and blackness seems to be the indicator for it. Otherness thus has nothing to do with the actual crossing of an administrative border, the border inscribed into bodies is thus not an administrative but an ontological line. This ontological line is charged with new meanings, discursively as well as materially.

Through media and political discourse, the racialized other is constructed, rooted in existing antiblackness but endowing it with new meanings. Thus, the association of Black women with sex work is perpetuated, a narrative that can be traced back to the Black concubinage. Blackness is consolidated as the other that carries crime and danger with it. With the high-profile arrests of Black people in “squalid camps around the capital,”³⁰⁷ Black people are associated with the conditions without citing the structural reasons for those conditions. The conditions are thus associated with blackness and not with antiblackness. This association is reinforced by the deportation practices of the Algerian authorities. Through the condition of being liable to deportation, people become exploitable and disenfranchised. And this disenfranchisement is also reflected in the course of arrests, imprisonment and actual deportation – up to the death of some deported people.

Thinking about the interconnections of European and Algerian racial formations through the interrelation of European and Algerian bordering practices, I need to state that racial formations in Algeria and European racial formations differ and root in other histories. Still, there are historical interconnections through the shared yet different relation to European colonialism, there are similarities between European and Algerian racial formations but also differences according to their spatial and temporal particularities. In line with the call for connections of Goldberg, however, there are some connections to be noticed as well: European externalization politics and the racial formations interwoven in them seem not to result in a unilinear adoption of deportation practices and racial formations through Algerian actors – rather, the outsourcing of the control of mobilities to Algerian actors results in the intensification of deportation practices. This intensification, a transformation of social conditions and relations of domination, are thus shaped through European migration politics and the racial formations that underlie these politics. The social conditions and relations of domination of the European migration regime and the Algerian deportation practice are interconnected, and so are the racial formations entangled with these regimes, since racial formations are always an expression of and a means to maintain relations of domination. Thus,

³⁰⁶ Allouche 2017.

³⁰⁷ Allouche 2017.

one can note that European racial formations are interconnected with the ones in the Algerian context, that the European racial formations lead to the deepening and intensification of the line delineating the human from the human other in its particular shape and form in the Algerian context, to the intensification of antiblackness and the concomitant construction of the human other condition along racial lines. Furthermore, the racial formations in the European and Algerian contexts are also interconnected, through their respective particular position in the relations of domination that emerged in and with European imperialism and colonialism: Whereas in multiple European countries, racialized populations are externalized in the course of the active forgetting of colonial continuities and the colonial responsibilities, in Algeria, blackness is externalized due to the self-conception that is based on the active remembrance of colonialism and the de- and anticolonial struggle of Algerians. These two mechanisms, similar but fundamentally different in their manifestation, are interrelated and inherently connected.

CONCLUSION

The need for considering the continuous externalization of European migration control from a decolonial angle constituted the starting point of this thesis: Therein lies the demand to consider the colonial continuities and continuations in and of the European control of migrant mobilities and to include not alone the European but also the non-European interests in the spinning of the close-meshed web of controls and surveillance. In order to consider and meet these demands, I raised the question: “How are deportations, deportabilities and racial formations entangled in and through the European control of migrant mobilities and the externalization of this control?” This question is based on an understanding of borders being both administrative and ontological. Thus, I undertook a reconceptualization of deportation and deportabilities along the lines of the demand to consider the colonial continuities of European bordering practices. In this conceptualization, deportations and deportabilities do not appear as expressing the European Union’s and member states’ obligation to secure their territorial borders. Rather, I considered the practice of securing territorial borders as an attempt to control, reproduce and reshape the ontological colonial line and the access to the human and the human other. Thus, deportations and deportabilities become apparent as being entangled with racial formations: at the same time being structured along the ontological colonial line but as well reshaping this line. I traced this entanglement in relation to the dominant social conditions that structure both deportations, deportabilities and the particular formation and transformation of racial formations. In this thesis, I approached racial formations in their continuities, both temporal and spatial. Considering the continuities also requires understand their particularities, an approach that has been captured through the concept of racial regionalization that creates a complex picture of racial formations: Spatial as well as temporal particularities but also continuities and interconnections create a multifaceted net of mechanisms delineating the human from the human other.

The main question raised in this thesis: “How are deportations, deportabilities and racial formations entangled in and through the European control of migrant mobilities and the externalization of this control?” can be addressed on multiple levels. On the one hand, the question calls for the examination of deportations and deportabilities from a racial formation perspective, allowing a nuanced understanding of the colonial continuities and continuation of deportations and deportabilities in a specific spatiotemporal site. On the other hand, the question of the entanglement of racial formations, deportations and deportabilities can be addressed from a transregional perspective: Therewith, a nuanced account of the externalization of European migration control can be elaborated, as it becomes apparent that there are interconnections

between multiple deportation practices and that these interconnections are related to the formation and transformation of racial formations. However, it also enables us to see that these interconnections are not linear, starting from European interests alone, but that deportations and deportabilities contribute to the maintenance of relations of domination that differ between different spatiotemporal sites but are still related.

In this thesis, I considered the entanglement of deportations, deportabilities and racial formation in three different sites: Switzerland, the Central Mediterranean and Algeria. It took different forms in all the three sites: Deportation practices differ between these sites, deportabilities are multiple not alone between but also within different spatiotemporal sites, and different racial formations are mobilized and reproduced. Thus, the entanglement of deportations, deportabilities and racial formations seems to be specific to the particular context one considers.

Still, there are structural similarities and continuities that became apparent throughout the chapters. In all the sites I considered, there is a multidimensional and multidirectional entanglement of deportations, deportabilities and racial formations. Racial formations underlie and form deportations as deportations root in the construction of the human and the human other and the association of these constructs to geohistorical sites. Thus, the racial delineation of the human from the human other aligns to some extent with administrative borders – an alignment that is captured through the conceptualizations of borders as a multilayered abyssal line, encompassing both administrative borders and the ontological colonial line. But deportations are not alone rooted in racial formations. Racial formations are also formed and transformed through deportations, as imaginaries are produced through the practice of deportation and through the deportabilities that are an integral part of the deportation power. These imaginaries are inscribed into bodies and contribute to the production of the human and the human other along racial lines.

Deportations are not alone a means to produce and reproduce imaginaries of the human and the human other along racial lines. This practice is further a means to produce the material conditions the human other is confined to. On the one hand through the physical violence concomitant to deportations. On the other hand, being liable to deportation shapes the material realities of those deportable. These conditions are captured through the concept of deportability. Using this concept enables to understand that the creation of the condition of being deportable is an “economic strategy of the neoliberal state”³⁰⁸ to create exploitable labor. In this thesis, I considered the racialization of exploitation on the level of national economies, such as in the Swiss and Algerian

³⁰⁸ Maira 2010, 31.

context, but also on the level of personal profit from deportations, as one can denote thinking of the money Algerian authorities make from the people deported. However, I did not mention the racialization of exploitation through companies that profit from the infrastructure of deportation. This aspect of racialized profit from deportations, however, is of great importance to understand the economic interests that are driving the maintenance and expansion of deportation power and is an important aspect for the deepening of the understanding of racialized and racializing exploitation.

However, the use of the concept of deportabilities is not alone propitious from an economic perspective. In this thesis, I therefore considered the condition of being liable to deportation rather from a racial formations perspective. This perspective enables a refinement of the concept of deportability as it enables to see the multiplicities of this condition: Deportations prompt deportabilities in the plural rather than in the singular, as deportabilities and thus exploitabilities are shaped and structured through policies but also along racial lines. This becomes most apparent considering the practice of racial profiling that is applied in both the Swiss and the Algerian context. To be more precise, deportabilities and exploitabilities are structured through an entanglement of legal and racial lines, since racial formations enter policies – an entanglement that might be most blatant in the “Ausschaffungsinitiative” in the Swiss context.

From a perspective of racial formations, the concept of deportabilities further promises insights into the colonial continuities and continuations in and of deportations. It renders apparent that the entanglement of deportations and racial formations is not about the actual moment of deportation alone. Rather, through the “machine of inclusion”, those considered deportable become the other within and thus, the line delineating the belonging from the non-belonging is reinforced and reshaped. Therewith, the concept of deportabilities, in its original use termed in the singular, becomes a nuanced tool for understanding the multifaceted economic and racial implications and effects of the bordering practice beyond the moment of actual deportation. The exploration of the entanglement of racial formations, deportations and deportabilities thus enables an understanding of the complexities and multifacetedness of the practice of deportation and its prospects. It also demonstrates that deportations must be considered as embedded in relations of domination: The legal frameworks for deportations and their implementation are both structured through and structuring relations of domination – and the racial formations that express the interests of dominant social conditions.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁹ Goldberg 1992, 544.

The main question of this thesis could on the one hand be approached within the different spatiotemporal sites: “How are racial formations, deportations and deportabilities entangled in Switzerland, in the Central Mediterranean and in Algeria?” Further and in accordance with Goldberg’s concept of racial regionalization, I took a transregional approach to understand not alone the spatial and temporal particularities but also the spatial and temporal interconnections of racial formations and deportation practices. This transregional approach renders apparent that multiple racial formations and deportation practices become entangled through the continuous externalization of European bordering practices. This entanglement is not unidimensional and unilinear. Rather, there are multifaceted interconnections, one on the level of deportations: Deportation practices in one spatiotemporal site influence deportation practices in another, as one can denote considering how European deportations led to the increase of Algerian deportations. It is not alone multiple deportation practices that are interconnected – through the interconnections of deportation practices the racial formations that are entangled with these practices get interconnected and linked to each other. Still, the racial formations specific to the multiple spatiotemporal sites do not replace or merge into each other. Rather, as the Algerian example showed, the outsourcing of European migration control prompted an intensification of the Algerian deportation practice – an intensification that led to the intensification of antiblackness and the transformation of racial formations. Thus, the examination of the entanglement of deportations, deportabilities and racial formations from a transregional perspective supports the need for the concept of racial regionalization: Comparisons alone would undermine the connections that arise from colonial continuities as well as regional interconnections – and would thus undermine the understanding of the complex spatial and temporal entanglement of racial formations, deportations and deportabilities.

Attempting to understand the European bordering practices of deportation and deportabilities and their outsourcing through their entanglement with racial formations was an attempt to meet the demand to confront Eurocentric accounts of the externalization of European border control. However, this attempt has been limited. The examination of deportations and deportabilities in their entanglement with racial formations, and the embedding of deportations, deportabilities and racial formations in their particular relations of domination, omitted a central criticism: I did not consider the agencies of migrants – an omission that I intended to counter through the inclusion of migrants’ agencies and resistance against both the European control of migrant mobilities as well as the racisms that are inherent in this control in form of perspectives from migrants and solidarity groups. However, for the most part, I reproduced the silencing of migrant agencies. This fuels imaginaries that are inherent in dominant European representations of migrants: Migrants are

dependent and reliant on European humanitarianism. This perception is used to rationalize the exacerbation of the control of migrant mobilities, as the example of transmediterranean deportations indicates. It further reinforces European constructions of the white innocent self. Omitting migrants' agencies not alone reproduces imaginaries that are part of the relations of domination that I want to see ended from the bottom of my heart, but it also creates a simplified understanding of domination and power, of the border regime and of the formation of mobilities. This can be countered through the use of approaches to migration that focus on the autonomy of migration.³¹⁰ Autonomy of migration approaches do not alone counter a dominant representation of migrants but generate a nuanced understanding of the border regime and the formation of mobilities. In such an understanding, mobilities are not alone formed through actors attempting to control and halt migrant mobilities, but migration itself and resistant practices are another facet of the formation of migrant mobilities and of (trans)forming the border regime. It thus generates an important reconceptualization of the European border regime and intervenes in the representation of omnipotent Europe. This approach is also meaningful for the examination of deportations and deportabilities. It could further deepen the understanding of the entanglement of deportations, deportabilities and racial formations through the foregrounding of an understanding of power that is attentive to its complex and processual nature, encompassing multiple levels and actors.³¹¹ As not alone those considered to be in power, but also the resistance to it is an important aspect in the (re)formation of power. This enables to understand migration as a practice that challenges the relations of domination in its fundament.³¹²

This insight is also with what I want to conclude this thesis, even if I did not do justice to the demand for including migrant agencies: Deportations and deportabilities perpetuate racial formations and the relations of domination that these formations are embedded in and maintaining. Migrant mobilities challenge not alone the European migration regime but also the ontological colonial line that is inherent in this regime. The demand for freedom of movement is thus a demand that undermines the foundations of the relations of domination and implies a fundamental rethinking of the human – demands that I want to support to the fullest.

³¹⁰ see Cases-Cortes, Cobarrubias, and Pickles 2015; De Genova 2017; Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2013.

³¹¹ See Benzec and Kurnik, Mezzadra and Neilson 2013, Wiertz 2020.

³¹² See Achiume 2019; Anderson and Sharma 2009; Jones 2019; De Genova 2017; De Genova 2018c; Waila 2013.

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