

London's deportation apparatus: The 'administrative removal' of rough sleeping European Union citizens, 2010–17

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Funding information

Narodowe Centrum Nauki, Grant/Award Number: 2020/39/D/HS5/02319; Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, Grant/Award Number: 786490; University of Warsaw Priority Research Area V of the 'Excellence Initiative – Research University' programme, Grant/Award Number: BOB-IDUB-622-55/2021; University of Warsaw Microgrant of the 'Excellence Initiative – Research University', Grant/Award Number: BOB-661-1073/2022

Abstract

Brexit brought an end to the free-movement rights of EU citizens in the United Kingdom, but the rights of the poorest Europeans were being actively curtailed even before that. From 2010, street homeless EU citizens were deported through a series of pilot schemes operating in London. In 2016, their 'administrative removal' was instituted as national policy. Using process-tracing methodology, we have analysed publicly available documents and others obtained through Freedom of Information requests to assemble an account of how and why a range of 'stakeholders' worked together to deport rough-sleeping EU citizens. Our paper addresses two research questions: (i) what actors contributed to these deportations and (ii) through the use of which analytic framework(s) can we begin to understand the deportation of street homeless foreigners? As we find, London's deportation apparatus involved national and local-level state actors, homelessness NGOs and local businesses. The deportation of rough-sleeping EU citizens was a racist biopolitical practice that reflected a concern for 'hygiene' at local and national scales, as well as the prevention of 'harm' to individual and social bodies.

KEYWORDS

biopower, deportation, London, migrant workers, rough sleeping, street homelessness

1 | INTRODUCTION: THE 'ABUSE OF RIGHT' POLICY

In May 2016 the UK Home Office (HO) introduced a new policy interpreting street homelessness as an 'abuse' of EU¹ citizens' right of freedom of movement (FOM) within the European Union. The 'abuse of right' policy effectively criminalised rough sleeping² for EU citizens living in the United Kingdom. Under the policy, EU citizens encountered by the HO sleeping rough could be arrested, detained, 'administratively removed' and banned from the country regardless of whether they were exercising EU treaty rights (for instance, as students or workers). Between May 2016 and December 2017,

hundreds of EU citizens³ were removed under the policy, which involved close cooperation between a range of state and non-state actors including government departments, local councils, the police, and some of the UK's biggest homelessness NGOs. The 'abuse of right' policy, unprecedented in an EU context, disproportionately targeted Central and Eastern European (CEE) nationals, with Roma people especially affected (Corporate Watch, 2017, p. 5; Demars, 2017, p. 21).

The free movement of European Union citizens within the EU is governed by the Citizens' Directive⁴. The directive states that EU nationals can move freely across the borders of the EU and enjoy an initial right to reside in any of its countries for a period of 3 months

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providing they are in possession of a valid identity card or passport. After this initial 3-month period, EU citizens' right to reside will depend on their exercising treaty rights (as a worker, a self-employed person, a student, a person who is 'self-sufficient', or, under certain conditions, as a jobseeker⁵) and not being 'an unreasonable burden on the social assistance system of the host Member state'. The Directive does not cite rough sleeping as a potential basis for the withdrawal of the right to free movement.

The 'abuse of right' policy was introduced a month before the June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the EU. In a contemporaneous report on the policy, Demars (2017) tracks its origins and development and gives an overview of how it operated, while Evans (2020) has explained why the HO's interpretation of street homelessness as an 'abuse' or 'misuse' of FOM rights was legally faulty. Other researchers have cited cooperation between homelessness NGOs and the HO under the 'abuse of right' policy as an instantiation of the UK's 'hostile environment' for migrants (Corporate Watch, 2017; Griffiths & Yeo, 2021). But the policy has not been analysed within the broader context of deportation and its role within states. It also remains to be explained why a diverse ensemble of state, parastatal and nonstate agencies should have 'partnered up' around the deportation of CEE rough sleepers.

This paper maps the institutional actors involved in devising and implementing the 'abuse of right' policy, and asks: through what analytic framework(s) can we begin to understand the deportation of rough sleepers? We build on three bodies of scholarship in particular—research interpreting deportation as a 'practice of power [concerned with the] policing of the foreign poor' (Walters, 2002); literature acknowledging the participation of multiple actors in the compulsory removal of noncitizens (Kalir & Wissink, 2016); and biopolitical accounts of immigration controls and race (e.g., De Genova, 2010; Inda & Dowling, 2013; McWhorter, 2017; Smith & Vasudevan, 2017). We also draw on Anderson's (2013) account of the relationship between immigration controls and anti-vagrancy policies and Fox et al.'s (2012) influential conception of the de-whitening of some EU citizens in a post-2004-accession context.

In analysing how the various 'stakeholders' involved in the policy worked together, we foreground the role of UK homelessness NGOs, some of which not only failed to resist but actively embraced and facilitated the deportation of street homeless foreigners. We show how the 'abuse of right' policy, formally introduced by the government department responsible for expulsions (HO), was originated, developed and implemented through the combined agency of a diverse network of governmental and nongovernmental actors representing different but converging sectors, scales and interests—all of them concerned with the management of urban populations and space. Complementing scholarship that has explained expulsions in terms of the securitisation of borders (Menjívar, 2014), the reassertion of sovereignty by hegemonic power (De Genova, 2010), and global capitalism's administration of labour (Golash-Boza, 2015; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013), our actor mapping mobilizes Foucault's concept of 'apparatus' in support of a biopolitical analysis of the deportation of street homeless foreigners.

We develop our account in six parts, including this introduction and a coda. In part two we conceptualise the 'abuse of right' policy as a technique of biopower. We mobilise the concept of 'apparatus' to analyse a phenomenon that does not fit tidily into established paradigms for the study of deportations. In the third part we explain our process tracing method, which involved the analysis of policy documents and other bureaucratic material, and account for our own positionality within the research process. Our main argument emerges in the fourth part of the article, where we present a chronology of the 'abuse of right' policy and map the actors involved. As we explain, the policy emerged out of earlier pilot schemes aimed at removing rough-sleeping EU migrants from the streets of London. These policies originated in the London borough of Westminster in 2010 and were initially directed at rough-sleeping Roma EU citizens. Westminster council was subsequently instrumental in pushing for their roll-out as national policy. The 'abuse of right' policy represents an unusual example of national deportation policy developing out of municipal social policy and, we suggest, can be analysed as an example of neoliberal governmentality in action at the nexus of the two. This was not a straightforward case of the state 'outsourcing' immigration controls to local government or charities. Rather, the actors involved had a shared interest in reducing the number of rough sleepers on London's streets. In the fifth part of the paper, we underline how the targeting of specific populations (low-income CEE migrant workers, particularly those of Roma background) as well as the language deployed in policy documents betray a clear racial dimension to the 'abuse of right' policy. A coda (part six) describes the aftermath of the policy, from the 2017 High Court ruling that quashed it to recent provisions in the UK Immigration Rules that make rough sleeping a ground upon which non-UK nationals can have their permission to be in the country cancelled or refused.

2 | THE DEPORTATION OF STREET HOMELESS FOREIGNERS AS A TECHNIQUE OF BIOPOWER

The 'abuse of right' policy does not fit comfortably with theories of deportation based around securitisation (Léonard, 2010) or the administration of labour. The UK already possessed and made use of legal mechanisms for the enforced removal of those deemed threats to national security, while, as will be seen, 'economically inactive' EU citizens could be and were removed on the basis of 'nonexercise of treaty rights' (Evans, 2020). Many of the street homeless EU citizens targeted for deportation through the 'abuse of right' policy were in work. Neither was the deportation of rough-sleeping CEE nationals deployed as a spectacle (De Genova, 2013) or performance of sovereignty (Hansen & Stepputat, 2005) aimed at satisfying nationalistic sentiment or discouraging migrants from coming to the United Kingdom. The policy involved the low-key (even somewhat secretive) bureaucratic planning and execution of (mostly) night-time operations undertaken by HO Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) teams with the assistance of police officers, council

workers and NGO-run homelessness 'outreach' teams. Moreover, although immigration-enforcement operations were carried out against rough sleepers in regional cities (e.g., in Bristol; Cork, 2017), they were conceived at, justified in reference to and largely conducted at a metropolitan scale. Undoubtedly a species of 'everyday bordering' (Yuval-Davis et al., 2018), the 'abuse of right' policy aimed at the expulsion of a specific group of foreigners—namely, racialized (Fox et al., 2012) CEE migrants—not so much from the UK as from the streets of central London. It is precisely with a mind to its conception as a means of cleansing a given urban space of unwanted bodies that we propose to examine the policy through the lens of biopolitics.

Foucault conceives of biopower as a political rationality 'that endeavours to administer, optimize, and multiply [life], subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations' (1978, p. 137). He traces the historical development of biopower as directed both at 'man-as-species' and individual lives and bodies, analysing its manifestation in efforts aimed at the hygienic management and regulation of the 'health' of biological 'populations'. Examples of biopolitical 'domains of intervention' cited by Foucault include attempts by states to control birth and death rates and to regulate the increasingly urbanized environments in which citizens live (2003, pp. 242–246). Foucault specifically invokes state racism in his account of biopower. He views it as a defining political rationality of the modern age, citing 'the internal racism of permanent purification [as] one of the basic dimensions of social normalization' (Foucault, 2003, p. 62). More recent scholarship has distilled the connection between biopolitics and race down to the succinct question of 'when and how do some lives and bodies matter' (Smith & Vasudevan, 2017, p. 211), shedding light on the processes of racialization by which bodies and populations deemed either surplus or a threat to the social 'body' as a whole are 'abandoned, incarcerated, or otherwise "encouraged" to pass out of existence' (McWhorter, 2017, p. 291).

In a deportation context, the use of expulsion in regulating populations, and in particular the labour force, is well established (Cockcroft, 1986; Golash-Boza, 2015; with Sarah Willen making a direct referral to deportation as a form of biopolitics; 2010). Deportation has also been used as a means of removing or relocating unwanted 'elements' of a population, with well-known examples including the Stalin-era Soviet Union's deportation of minority nationalities (Pohl, 2000), the USA's targeting of Mexicans for deportation from the 1920s to the present day (De Genova, 2004), and the deportation of 'foreign-born radicals' and 'criminal aliens' (Bausum, 2009) that continues across the contemporary world (Kapoor, 2018). The 'abuse of right' policy operated by drawing a socio-legal—and, implicitly, ethical—distinction between 'genuine' mobile EU citizens exercising EU free movement rights in the 'correct' way and others who 'abused' this right by virtue of not having accommodation—and seeking to expel the latter. But as we suggest, the highly selective and targeted application of the policy, and its implicit couching in ideas of 'hygiene', give weight to its characterization as a technique of racist biopower.

We aim to show how the 'abuse of right' policy arose out of a culture of close cooperation between public bodies and non-governmental organisations around the management and regulation of street homeless migrant bodies and 'populations'. To this end, we mobilise another Foucauldian concept: apparatus. This term, though much debated, is generally understood to refer to the operations of political rationality as manifested by a particular network of forces in a given context. As Foucault (1980, p. 194) states:

What I'm trying to pick out with this term is, firstly, a thoroughly heterogenous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements [...] I also understand by the term [apparatus] a sort of [...] formation which has as its major function at a given historical moment that of responding to an urgent need. The [apparatus] thus has a dominant strategic function. [Our emphasis]

Barnett (2005, p. 9) has observed the temptation to understand 'apparatus' and other concepts bequeathed by the literature on governmentality as descriptive of 'instrumental mechanisms by which clearly defined actors, possessed with clearly articulated interests, pursue their clearly articulated programmes', thereby neglecting complex questions of agency and subject formation. Bearing this caveat in mind, we have found the concept of apparatus useful in thinking through governmentality-in-action: that is, knowledge-power as manifested strategically in the situated relations between specific institutions, discourses and practices in a particular time and space, and acting on particular people and populations. The term has often been mobilized in discussions of urbanism and urban social policy. Pløger (2008, p. 56), for example, employs the concept of apparatus to examine how technologies and discourses of power have been combined in addressing the problem of the efficient organisation and governance of urban space. Noting that it was 'through the city that societies developed ideas about how to discipline life through space', Pløger explores the operation of apparatuses of power in 'manag[ing] or govern[ing] the polis' (2008, p. 62) through architecture, building and housing regulations and official exhortations to cleanliness. In this case, deportation or the threat of it, was brought to bear on the problem of disciplining the presence within the metropolis of a specific group of non-citizens: low-income migrant workers from the eastern and southern edges of the European Union, who often could not afford the cost of accommodation and sought to make ends meet by sleeping rough, sometimes in encampments. The 'abuse of right' policy sought to 'tackle' EU migrant-worker rough sleeping by providing for the coercive removal of those who failed to secure accommodation for themselves.

Given the belief of many homelessness 'stakeholders' that much EU rough sleeping was 'deliberate' (see below), it is tempting to relate the rationality of the 'abuse of right' policy to welfare policies adopted in neoliberal democracies since the 1980s and aimed at 'responsibilising' citizens, including rough sleepers (e.g., Whiteford, 2010), judged deficient in terms of their capacity for 'self-government'. Bullen's (2015) account of Australian homelessness policy traces a shift in state policy and governance away from structural understandings of homelessness as produced by 'housing market conditions, poverty, unemployment, domestic violence and the extent of provision of social services' (Bullen, 2015, p. 219) towards an understanding of the phenomenon in terms of 'individual deficits, individual pathology, the personal characteristics, behaviours and needs of homeless people'. As we show, the 'abuse of right' policy rested on a twin conception of EU citizens sleeping rough in central London as morally deficient and amenable to having their conduct modified through the tactical deployment of sanction and threat. However, there is an important difference in this case, with CEE and European rough sleepers emerging from discourses around the policy less as citizen-subjects to be 'responsibilised' than as foreign objects to be cut out.

3 | METHODOLOGY AND POSITIONALITY

Given that this paper has emerged from prior engaged research, we should account for our positionality within the research process. Benjamin has a background in welfare advice and grassroots community work with destitute migrants in London. In 2016, he, along with others, began investigating the deportations of CEE rough sleepers when street homeless migrant members of a community center he was involved with began to disappear. He helped set up and coordinate the legal and media campaign against the 'abuse of right' policy and has more recently worked for the law center that brought the successful December 2017 challenge against the policy, running (2019–21) a project to monitor and defend the rights of homeless EU citizens through Brexit. This paper therefore has its roots in Benjamin's involvement in anti-deportation activism and migrant solidarity campaigns. Agnieszka, meanwhile, is a CEE national who lived and worked as a deportation researcher in the Brexit-era UK for over 2 years before moving back to Poland.

Our collaboration began in early 2020 and has largely taken the form of qualitative process tracing. We understand 'process tracing' as an attempt to analyse how causal effects are generated and outcomes emerge (Beach, 2016) by reconstructing the sequence (Mahoney, 2010) of actions leading to a given event. In assembling our account, we have drawn on grassroots and legal research undertaken by Benjamin and colleagues since 2016. Given the general lack of transparency of HO procedures and the somewhat clandestine beginnings of the 'abuse of right' policy, researching the policy has required detective work (Collier, 2011, p. 824). Over time, we have collected as many pieces of available information as possible; some of this information was in the public domain, while

some was obtained by Freedom of Information requests to various public authorities.

Our research has encompassed law on the books and law in action. We have analysed both the legal basis for EU FOM (the Citizens' Directive) and its transposition into UK law [Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2016]. We have examined documents produced by the actors involved in the administrative removal of EU rough sleepers, including: various versions of guidelines for HO caseworkers; policy documents produced by the Greater London Authority (GLA), councils, and homelessness charities; and contracts and service-level agreements. We have also considered relevant legal judgments—crucially the 2017 decision in *R. (Gureckis) v Secretary of State for the Home Department*, which ruled the 'abuse of right' policy unlawful. In the event history (Waldner, 2016) presented below, we pay particular attention to mapping the actors involved in the deportation of EU rough sleepers.

4 | CHRONOLOGY OF THE 'ABUSE OF RIGHT' POLICY

The first policies aimed at the 'administrative removal' of rough-sleeping EU citizens were developed around 2010. These policies were conceived and tested in Westminster, a central London borough, through Operation Ark (2010–11), which was funded by the central government but administered by the GLA, London's metropolitan authority (Demars, 2017, p. 8). A 2011 report on Operation Ark, prepared in support of a bid for the extension of funding, outlined the reasons why such an operation was seen as necessary in Westminster in particular:

For many Central and Eastern Europeans (CEE) coming to the UK, Westminster is the gateway into the country. This is especially the case for those travelling on a limited income or targeting low-income jobs as these individuals will often have come into the country on coaches rather than using low-cost airlines and flying into Stansted (from where the cheapest coach travel is to Westminster). Many CEEs will consequently spend a period of time sleeping rough on the streets of Westminster [...]

(City of Westminster, 2011)

Over 70 people suspected of being rough sleepers were removed during Operation Ark. The legal basis for their removal was nonexercise of treaty rights (meaning those removed were held not to be in work) rather than 'abuse' or 'misuse' of free-movement rights. The extension to the operation was indeed funded.

In 2013, during the countdown to the end of the labour-market restrictions for Romanian and Bulgarian citizens (imposed following the accession of those countries to the EU in 2008), the Metropolitan Police, along with partners including the Home Office, conducted another Westminster pilot operation. Operation Chefnak openly

targeted Roma EU citizens sleeping rough in popular tourist areas and was justified by reference to the association of Roma migrants with 'antisocial behaviour' and low-level crime. The active participation of the Romanian Embassy in Operation Chefornak (Embassy of Romania to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 2013) reflected a consensus between host country and country of origin in terms of how destitute Romanian Roma were perceived; neither national authority was inclined to view this group of rough sleepers as anything other than a problem to be got rid of.

Operation Adoze (OA), the direct precursor of the 'abuse of right' policy, was also developed in response to an increase in the number of Roma rough sleepers in central London (Demars, 2017). Launched in 2015, OA piloted the interpretation of rough sleeping as an 'abuse' of EU free movement rights. OA was carried out in Westminster in November and December 2015 and involved Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) teams working alongside outreach workers from homelessness NGOs as well as council officers. OA led to the removal of 127 people in Westminster before being extended to neighbouring boroughs. Westminster subsequently lobbied central government for the interpretation of street homelessness as an 'abuse' of free-movement rights to be rolled out nationwide (City of Westminster, 2016).

The 'abuse of right' policy was introduced as a nationwide HO policy in May 2016, a month before the referendum that resulted in a 52%–48% vote in favor of Britain leaving the European Union. The policy was formalized through amendments to the HO's guidance for caseworkers on their power to issue EEA nationals with removal notices. The amended guidance stated that '[r]ough sleeping is considered to be an abuse of free movement rights, therefore EEA nationals encountered sleeping rough may be subject to administrative removal' (Home Office, 2016)⁶. As Evans (2020) points out, in later versions of the guidance, 'abuse of right' was amended to 'misuse of right', bringing the guidance into line with regulation 23 (6) (c) of the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2016, which stated that 'an EEA national who has entered the United Kingdom [...] may be removed if [...] the Secretary of State has decided that the person's removal is justified on grounds of misuse of rights'. Between May 2016 and December 2017, the policy was implemented in a number of UK cities, but most concertedly in London, which had by far the largest population of street homeless EU nationals. Over 700 EU citizens were detained and 'administratively removed' under the policy (Evans, 2020). Others were subjected to the confiscation of identity documents and informed that they must either find accommodation or leave the UK 'voluntarily' within 30 days, under pain of forced removal.

4.1 | 'Intent on sleeping rough'

The 'abuse of right' policy was justified by appeal to domestic immigration rules incorporating EU free-movement law. But, as the evidence presented by the UK government during the December 2017 judicial review hearing indicates, the policy was designed with a

view to addressing street homelessness in London rather than migration flows per se. Evidence (*R. (Gureckis) v Secretary of State for the Home Department and others*, 2017) was heard from a senior policy adviser at the HO, who:

explained that the background to the policy was the increase in rough sleeping. In October 2015, a report from the Department for Communities and Local Government indicated that rough sleeping had increased by 55% nationally and 91% in Greater London, in the period between 2010 and 2015. There had been a 'surge in entry to the UK by EEA nationals from less economically prosperous areas intent on rough sleeping' [...] which had caused social problems such as littering, antisocial and unhygienic behaviour, and the building of encampments. Rough sleepers could damage the reputation of central London areas as a tourist destination; they had an adverse impact on the amenities of residents and other visitors; and public authorities incurred costs in managing the problems which they caused.

The above extract articulates two key claims underlying the 'abuse of right' policy: that there had been a 'surge in entry to the UK' of CEE nationals exercising FOM rights between 2010 and 2015; and that this group was 'intent on sleeping rough'. It also outlines the principal harmful effects of rough sleeping by EU citizens in the eyes of the HO: the effect on tourism; the effect on local 'amenities'; and the cost to public bodies of 'managing the problems' caused by street homeless CEE nationals. Rather than invoking sovereignty, nationality and the protection of borders, the HO's submission to the High Court stresses the concerns of municipal actors, albeit in the context of a central London borough (Westminster) which is of strategic, symbolic and economic importance to the British state.

5 | STAKEHOLDERS IN DEPORTATION

Our process-tracing analysis indicates that the 'abuse of right' policy originated at the level of municipal (i.e., borough) and metropolitan (i.e., the upper-tier authority, the GLA) government in London. A key site through which policy was coordinated was the '[London] Mayor's Rough Sleeping Group' (MRSG). The MRSG was a regular policy deliberation forum initiated and convened by the GLA between 2014 and 2018. Its members or 'stakeholders', later referred to as 'partners' (Mayor of London, 2016), including the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG; now MHCLG), officials from various London boroughs, and senior managers from several large homelessness NGOs (Mayor of London, 2015). The Home Office also regularly attended MRSG meetings.

How precisely did municipal-level efforts to address rough sleeping among a particular group of EU citizens result in a national deportation policy, and what was the role of the various

stakeholders? Demars (2017) traces the origins of the 'abuse of right' policy back to an August 2015 meeting of the MRSG (cf. Figure 1). The focus of this meeting was the 'overall increase in the number of EEA Nationals [on the streets of London] and the limited service offers for this cohort'. A GLA official presented a paper on the use of 'enforcement' against rough sleepers, with 'enforcement' apparently denoting a combination of immigration enforcement and police 'antisocial behaviour' powers. A senior manager from St. Mungo's presented 'guidance on joint working between rough sleeping services and ICE', noting that a key aim was to achieve consistency in terms of how different NGO outreach workers undertook joint work with HO ICE teams. While no private businesses were members of the MRSG, minutes from the same meeting offer insight into the role of such actors in influencing the rough sleeping policy:

The City [of Westminster] mentioned that its local businesses and members are concerned to tackle rough sleeping and members have played a valuable role in securing resources to do so. Businesses whose custom has declined because potential customers find large groups of rough sleepers seeking work intimidating have been supportive of Thames Reach and Homeless Link's [two more homelessness NGOs] work to coordinate efforts to tackle rough sleeping.

No principled objections to the use of immigration enforcement to 'tackle' rough sleeping are recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Indeed, a paper written by an MRSG working group including representatives of the Metropolitan Police, homelessness NGOs,

DCLG, local authorities, and the GLA (Demars, 2017, Appendix E) indicates that, while 'statutory' responses were viewed as a 'last resort' to be deployed where 'other approaches' have failed, the MRSG saw '[j]oint work with the Police and/or Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) [...] as key to effective results and its absence detrimental to them.' Among the working paper's recommendations was 'resourcing ICE to facilitate additional joint shifts with outreach teams'. As the working paper makes clear, joint work with ICE teams was seen as part of a repertoire of responses to 'entrenched' rough sleeping which also included measures aimed at preventing squatting and the building of encampments (e.g., Public Space Protection Orders, dispersal orders and anti-trespassing legislation).

There was a shared perception that new legal measures were needed to deal with the increasing number of EU citizens sleeping rough. Members of the group were:

strongly supportive of amending the UK's Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations, which define how the UK interprets the European Council Directive 2004/38/EC's stipulation that 'EU citizens or members of their family may be expelled from the host country on grounds of public policy, public security or public health' [...] They wanted to see the regulations changed, so that the ASB [antisocial behaviour, the authors] often associated with rough sleeping becomes legitimate grounds for removing EU nationals from the UK. [This] would enable a more robust approach to ensuring those sleeping rough are helped

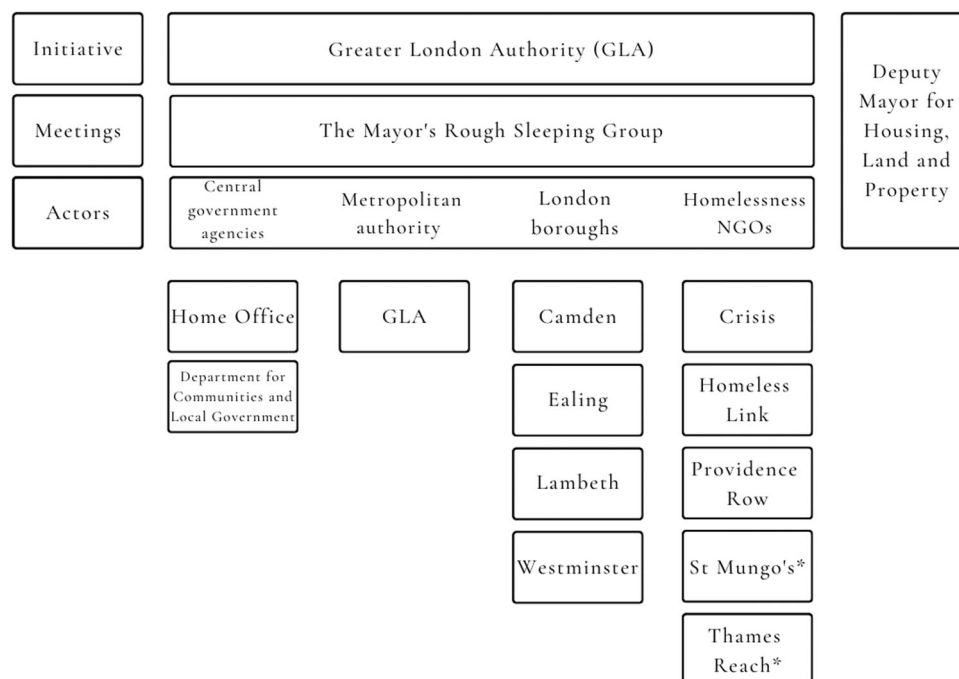


FIGURE 1 Actors involved in the Mayor's Rough Sleeping Group meeting that led to the development of the policy. Two NGOs marked with an asterisk were involved in the implementation of the policy. Own elaboration on the basis of Demars (2017).

off the streets quickly, rather than needing to wait for an extended period of time, during which the individual is at risk and communities are disrupted.

(Demars, 2017 Appendix E)

The above excerpt gives a snapshot of the reasoning deployed by homelessness 'stakeholders' to justify the use of immigration enforcement against rough sleepers—complete with some grimly ironic phrasing ('helped off the streets'). It is worth noting, however, that considerations around ASB were ultimately not included in the legal rationale adopted for Operation Adoze and the national 'abuse of right' policy. For reasons that are not clear from our process tracing, the very act of rough sleeping, rather than the 'antisocial' conduct associated with it, ended up being interpreted as an 'abuse' or 'misuse' of FOM rights.

Not only the targeting of specific groups of rough sleepers (CEE migrant workers in general and Roma people in particular) but also the language used by rough sleeping 'stakeholders' adds weight to our characterisation of the 'abuse of right' policy in terms of a racist biopolitics. A stereotype of 'swan-skewering' CEE Roma as 'epitomizing and embodying cultural backwardness' was fostered across UK government and media discourse in the 2010s, with '[t]he Roma frame [being] liberally applied to other East Europeans who would not necessarily identify themselves as Roma [...] impugn[ing] not only their Europeanness but their whiteness as well' (Fox et al., 2012, pp. 688–689). In bureaucratic documents encountered during our process tracing, CEE migrants are not only assumed to be perpetrators of ASB, but metonymically and otherwise associated with dirt, bodily functions and dishonest behaviour. A 2016 street homelessness 'evidence base' document produced by the 'evaluation and performance team' at Westminster council deploys tropes that Tyler (2013) describes as 'abjectifying'. Registering the impact of rough sleeping on 'business areas [and] tourist hotspots', the document notes that 'Ryman's [stationery shop] on the Strand deals with the daily detritus, regular reports of human feces, vomit and litter as they open the store in the morning'. The document subsequently homes in on a '420% increase' in the numbers of:

[E]conomic migrants [...] roughly 20–40 years old, males with limited (or no) support needs [who] maintain that they are in the UK to find work and provide a wage for their families in Romania. It is important to remember these people are not homeless but are prepared to sleep on the streets in an absence of free accommodation.

Across the piece, albeit to a lesser or greater degree, homelessness 'stakeholders' made use of codified ideas about male migrancy in justifying policies aimed at removing CEE rough sleepers from the streets of central London. In Anderson's (2013, p. 45) terms, the perceived "degenerate" whiteness' of some post-2004 accession EU migrants undermined their claims to membership to the 'community of value', bolstering the case for disciplinary intervention in the form of removals.

5.1 | The role of NGOs

The implementation of the 'abuse of right' policy between May 2016 and December 2017 relied on close co-operation between ICE teams, council officers and NGO workers at the managerial- and street-level. In 2016/17 twelve London councils reported that their commissioned outreach teams had conducted joint visits to rough sleepers with ICE teams (Corporate Watch, 2017, p. 4). During these operations, which mostly took place at night, immigration enforcement officers, sometimes accompanied by other street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1980) including police officers, council workers and NGO workers, visited the outdoor sleeping sites of street homeless migrants. Those encountered were required to produce documentation, including IDs and, in some cases, evidence of work⁷. CEE nationals encountered during the course of raids were sometimes taken into immigration custody on the spot. More commonly, they were served with notices obliging them either to find accommodation or leave the UK within 30 days. In most cases, they were instructed to report to a HO reporting centre in the meantime. Sometimes ID documents were confiscated. Individuals given notices of removal were not always provided with appeal papers as required by law (Demars, 2017). The identification, location, and targeting for detention or deportation of EU rough sleepers was planned, coordinated, and monitored through a combination of meetings and digital communications at different scales. Intelligence for raids was in some cases provided in advance by charity outreach team managers or more senior staff in the form of spreadsheets of places to be targeted. In other instances, outreach workers physically led ICE teams to encampments inhabited by rough-sleeping CEE migrants (Corporate Watch, 2017; Demars, 2017). In sum, data provided by NGOs allowed for the production and multiplication of state power (Foucault, 1979).

Why did some NGOs work with local authorities and the Home Office to deport street homeless migrants? Is it possible to speak, after Foucault, of a 'dominant strategic function' of this apparatus of institutions, relations, measures and technologies that constituted the 'abuse of right' policy and its forerunners? It would be naive to ignore the question of contractual obligation. Looking diachronically, Evans, Richmond, and Shields have traced changes in the relationship between states and non-profit organizations in the transition from Keynesian to neoliberal modes of national governance, showing how '[t]he imposition of neoliberal governance structures on nonprofit service providers has served to compromise their autonomy and advocacy function while commercializing nonprofit operations and imposing burdens that have strained organizational capacity' (Evans et al., 2005, p. 74). Meanwhile, Peck and Tickell have identified '[public-NGO and public-private] partnership-based modes of policy development in areas like urban regeneration and social welfare' (2002, p. 390) as characteristic of the 'roll out' phase of neoliberalism, pointing up the burgeoning role of business and charities in 'central city makeovers' and 'disciplining the noncompliant' (2002, p. 394).

Public-NGO partnership is underpinned by 'the disciplining technologies of performance targets' (Clope et al., 2010). The standard model in

homelessness outreach commissioning is a contract or agreement signed between a local authority and an NGO outreach provider (St Mungo's, 2019). The service specifications for such contracts have typically included targets for the reduction of rough sleeping numbers (Corporate Watch, 2017) and the reconnection of UK-national rough sleepers to their 'home' areas (Johnsen & Jones, 2015), with some contracts stipulating the ability of councils withdraw all or part of funding allocated to commissioned services if targets are not met. Contracts frequently specify the need to work with the council and other agencies through an 'assertive outreach' approach targeting rough sleeping 'hotspots'. In 2012 St Mungo's and Thames Reach were contracted to provide rough-sleeping services through a Social Impact Bond (SIB) administered through the GLA on a payment-by-numbers basis. The SIB was partly funded by private money (Corporate Watch, 2017, p. 12). Metrics included the reduction of rough sleeping numbers and '[s]ustained reconnections (to home countries)—6 months minimum' (St Mungo's Broadway, 2015). Meanwhile, a 2015 contract for the provision of outreach services in Westminster specified that the chosen provider would be required to '[c]oordinate the rough sleeping response to Central and Eastern Europeans who are not accessing their treaty rights with a variety of partners including, but not limited to UKBA⁸ [UK Border Agency], MET [sic] police' (City of Westminster, 2015). Another document, produced for Kensington and Chelsea, stated that '[an] emphasis is being placed on the street outreach service having clearly developed partnerships including, but not limited to: the Street Population Coordinator, Metropolitan Police Service, Home Office Immigration Enforcement, wider Housing Department, the Community Safety Team, local Housing Providers and Clinical Commissioning Groups' (Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, 2016). Charity providers developed their tender bids in anticipation of the expectation of joint working and an 'assertive' enforcement-based approach: in a 2014 tender document for an outreach contract in the central borough of Tower Hamlets, Thames Reach emphasized the 'web of relationships' they had established within the borough as evidence of their commitment to 'multi-agency working'. The document noted that 'our links with the Metropolitan Police, [Tower Hamlets enforcement officers] and UKBA are excellent, having enabled successful hotspot operations, delivery around Operation Arc and joint patrols'. The document also noted that 'our messages are robust and persistent [...] making it clear that Tower Hamlets is not a soft touch in terms of getting a space in a hostel where the best option is reconnection, whether national or international' and that 'working closely with UKBA [...] is not palatable to some other teams' (London Borough of Tower Hamlets, 2014; Appendix B).

In the case of the 'abuse of right' policy, the neoliberal logic of subcontracting combined with real frustration at the difficulties of 'resolving' the rough sleeping of CEE nationals in Central London. The two biggest NGOs involved in the 'abuse of right' policy, St. Mungo's and Thames Reach, centre, both operationally and in their public communications, the importance of 'getting people off the streets'—that is, reducing the number of people sleeping rough. Such emphasis reflects their assessment of the danger to the health and wellbeing of homeless people of rough sleeping, which is evidence-based (see, e.g., Hodgetts et al., 2007; Sanders & Albanese, 2016), as well as the contractual obligations to

local-authority partners already outlined. Moreover, the limitations of the EU's Citizen's Directive have created 'a market economy form of citizenship, deeply stratified according to socioeconomic class, and inadequate to deliver principles of social justice' (O'Brien, 2017, p. 1). This, combined with UK government rules introduced to limit EEA migrants' entitlement to benefits (Barbulescu & Favell, 2020), presented homelessness services concerned with meeting rough-sleeping reduction targets with a very real challenge. To compound matters, many homelessness services lack training around EU rights or assume nonentitlement (Dickson et al., 2020; Morgan, 2021). Combined with other structural factors, such as a highly pressurized private sector rental market in London, this 'exclusionary and punitive legal environment' (O'Brien, 2017, p. 4) made the street homelessness of working-class CEE migrants appear intractable within a domestic social-policy frame strongly oriented towards individualized rather than collective homelessness 'solutions'. It was in such a context that 'voluntary' departure and, failing that, forced removal became orthodox, not to say reflexive, responses to non-UK national rough sleeping between 2010 and 2017.

How did the NGOs involved view their own engagement in deportation policies targeting rough sleepers? In the case of St Mungo's, collaboration with ICE was seen as an effective way of developing the governmentality of rough-sleeping migrants. A 2019 internal review of the NGO's work with the HO states that 'joint operations were seen by many in the homelessness sector as a useful tool to encourage people to take up an offer of accommodation or supported reconnection, particularly those whose outreach teams were finding it difficult to engage'. When offers of accommodation and 'reconnection' were not accepted, the locations of individuals or groups were indeed passed on to ICE (Demars, 2017; Appendix F). According to the NGO's 2019 review, St. Mungo's policy changed in 2016 after the introduction of the 'abuse of right' policy, with an 'updated instruction [being] issued, [sic] to the effect that if information needed to be shared about an individual sleeping rough where there was no consent, this would be provided to the Home Office by local authorities, not St Mungo's'. However, the review goes on to acknowledge that some outreach teams continued to share information directly until 2017.

The prevention of individual or social 'harm' was also cited by state and nonstate actors in justification of deportation policies targeting rough sleepers. St Mungo's (2019) review contains 14 references to 'harm': in some cases ('clients were experiencing severe destitution, deteriorating health, and in some cases dying') it is clear that the author has the health and wellbeing of rough sleepers in mind; elsewhere it is less clear whether individual or social 'harm' is being invoked (at times, the two kinds of harm appear to have been conflated). Municipal and state authorities, on the other hand, tended to be clearer in expressing the view that the 'harm' caused by rough sleeping among CEE migrant workers was of a 'social' ('harm to others') sort. According to one HO document, the aim of Operation Adoze was to:

reduce the number of EEA nationals sleeping rough in Westminster and neighbouring boroughs given the social harm seen by the local authorities and law

enforcement agencies, and the burden these individuals placed on local services. The approach focused on behaviour change [...] or seeking support from the services available to them to return home.

(Demars, 2017; Appendix D)

Returning to the public rationale deployed by homelessness NGOs, the idea that exposing street homeless non-UK nationals to immigration detention and removal to an uncertain future in their country of origin was comparatively less harmful than their remaining on the streets appears weakly grounded. So does the idea that the threat of immigration enforcement was likely to result in rough sleepers 'voluntarily' taking up accommodation or returning 'home'. Regardless, and despite certain differences in emphasis, the justification for the 'abuse of right' policy deployed by both state and non-state actors can be glossed in terms of the hygienic regulation of the urban landscape, with deportation leveraged as a 'proactive tool' (St Mungo's, 2019) to mitigate the 'harm' perceived as being done by, and to, foreign bodies that sleep outdoors.

6 | THE AFTERMATH: BREXIT AND COVID-19

We have analyzed the 'abuse of right' policy, through which the UK deported hundreds of CEE rough sleepers between 2010 and 2017, as a racist technique of biopolitics. Immigration-enforcement action was initiated against destitute migrant workers as a response to a municipal and metropolitan-level social-policy problem: rough sleeping in popular commercial and tourist areas of central London. The policy rested on shared or overlapping interests and rationalities among the 'apparatus' of state and non-state actors who worked together to develop and execute it. The language and tropes used by homelessness 'stakeholders' and the targeting of particular groups—including Roma EU citizens—viewed as particularly problematic and undesirable evidence a clear racial dimension to the policy.

In December 2017 the UK High Court ruled the 'abuse of right' policy unlawful after a judicial review challenge brought by the Public Interest Law Centre on behalf of three homeless claimants—two Poles and a Lithuanian. The judgment brought an end to targeted immigration-enforcement activities against street homeless CEE migrants. The judge in the case found that rough sleeping could not be considered an 'abuse' or 'misuse' of EU citizens' right to free movement because 'there was no proper basis for concluding that, by sleeping rough, a person who otherwise satisfied the conditions for residence, had undermined the purpose/s of the Directive'. She also ruled that the UK government had unlawfully discriminated against EU rough sleepers and engaged in the unlawful 'systematic verification' of their right to reside. The Home Office did not appeal the ruling and has paid out significant sums in damages to affected individuals (Ironmonger, 2018).

More recently, Brexit has stripped EU citizens living in the United Kingdom of the free movement rights they previously enjoyed. A significant number of homeless and insecurely housed CEE nationals

are likely to have become undocumented as a result of not having made a successful application to remain in the United Kingdom through the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) (Radziwinowiczówna & Lewis, 2021).⁹ At the same time, coronavirus has intensified the framing of rough sleeping as a problem of (public) health and hygiene (Barber, 2021; Blanchard, 2020). It remains to be seen whether rough sleeping 'stakeholders' will respond to this new conjuncture by seeking once again to persuade or compel EU rough sleepers to depart en masse. A large number of 'international reconnections' appear to have been completed in 2020–21 (Bulman, 2021) as the sector sought to dispose of some of the large numbers of EU citizens accommodated through the Covid-19 homelessness response. As this emergency provision has come to an end, only homeless EU citizens who have settled status have found it easy to secure 'move-on' accommodation; those without status, or with presettled status (conferred upon individuals who are able to provide a period of residence less than 5 years), are not being offered statutory assistance with housing (Barnard & Costello, 2020).

Meanwhile, the UK once again has a law on the books that effectively criminalises street homelessness for non-UK nationals. In late 2020 new provisions to Immigration Rules made rough sleeping a basis for refusal or cancellation of permission to be in the UK (Morgan, 2021). After a media and legal campaign, this new 'rough sleeping rule' was amended so that it applies to rough sleepers who 'repeatedly refused suitable offers of support' and 'engage [...] in persistent antisocial behaviour' (signalling the revival of ASB as a rationale underpinning the deportation of street homeless foreigners). It remains to be seen whether the coercive *modus operandi* of the 'abuse of right' policy will also be revived. What is more clear is that those working to oppose deportation need to be alive to the complex rationality of such enforced or coerced removals. The expulsion of street homeless foreigners cannot be interpreted solely by reference to the more conventional logics of border control; it must also be viewed in terms of the biopolitical management of negatively racialized populations at the municipal scale.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to Jean Demars for his insightful comments on the first version of this article as well as for obtaining documents analysed here. We would also like to thank two anonymous reviewers who provided us with useful comments and feedback on earlier versions of this article. This research was funded in part by the National Science Centre, Poland, grant number 2020/39/D/HS5/02319. For the purpose of Open Access, the author has applied a CC-BY public copyright licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) version arising from this submission. This publication was also supported by the University of Warsaw under the Priority Research Area V of the 'Excellence Initiative - Research University' programme (grant number BOB-IDUB-622-55/2021) as well as under the Microgrant of the 'Excellence Initiative - Research University' (grant number BOB-661-1073/2022).

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Research data are not shared.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ On the books, the 'abuse of right' policy applied not only to EU nationals, but to other citizens of the European Economic Area (which includes the EU member states plus Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway)—that is, people enjoying EU FOM rights. However, there is no evidence that any citizen of Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway was deported under the policy.
- ² 'Rough sleeping' is a UK expression for sleeping on the street, in other outdoor spaces or in indoor spaces not designed for human habitation. In the article, we use 'rough sleeping' synonymously with 'street homeless' to avoid repetition.
- ³ Evans (2020) reports that between January 2016 and April 2017, 708 individuals were removed, either voluntarily, or through enforcement, after being encountered on "rough sleeping visits".
- ⁴ Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States amending Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 and repealing Directives 64/221/EEC, 68/360/EEC, 72/194/EEC, 73/148/EEC, 75/34/EEC, 75/35/EEC, 90/364/EEC, 90/365/EEC and 93/96/EEC.
- ⁵ Section 3 of the article Article 7 of the Citizens' Directive stipulates the conditions that must be met by a jobseeker to qualify for FOM, for instance that they must have worked for over a year before becoming unemployed and be registered with a relevant employment office.
- ⁶ See Evans (2020, pp. 303–307) on the concept of 'abuse of right' in EU free movement law.
- ⁷ The demand that rough sleeping EU citizens produce evidence of work reflects the continuing use—wherever possible—of 'non-exercise of treaty rights' as a basis for administrative removal.
- ⁸ UKBA was abolished in 2013 during a restructuring of immigration bureaucracy in 2013. Its competences in respect of immigration detention and enforced removal were handed over to Home Office Immigration Enforcement.
- ⁹ The EUSS is a scheme through which EU citizens residing in the United Kingdom as of 31 December 2020 (and qualifying non-EU family members) can secure their right to remain in the United Kingdom. It grants eligible individuals different rights of legal residence depending on the length of their residency in the United Kingdom. All EU citizens living in the United Kingdom by 31 December 2020 had their rights guaranteed until 30 June 2021. Since the end of this 'grace period', only the holders of certain statuses enjoy the legal right to remain in the UK. Individuals who failed to secure their status by the end of the 'grace period' became subject to the 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF) regime, which continues to bar most non-UK nationals living in the UK from most forms of social assistance, putting them at increased risk of destitution.

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How to cite this article: Radziwinowiczówna, A. & Morgan, B. (2022). London's deportation apparatus: The 'administrative removal' of rough sleeping European Union citizens, 2010–17. *Population, Space and Place*, e2633. <https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.2633>