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Anastasia Tataryn on The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement. Edited by Nicholas DeGenova and Nathalie Peutz. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010. 520pp.

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Abstract

A review of:

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Human rights, Migration, Deportation, Freedom of movement, Sovereignty, Citizenship

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Nicholas DeGenova and Nathalie Peutz's collection unpacks the normative and administrative role of deportation in global migration regulation. The editors probe deportation as the expected and "reasonable" response to "irregular" migration, bringing together diverse historical, methodological, and geographical perspectives. Migration regulation involves more than a relationship between host and sending country. This volume demonstrates that deportation is part of a global response to migration that involves international coordination of regulating the borders of states through "expanded buffer zones of graduated securitization" (5) and governmentality. This multi-disciplinary collection excels in bringing together ethnographic work with critical theory and case study analysis. It is dense and theoretically intriguing, but many chapters are grounded in real events. Most chapters would be easy reads for scholars of migration and beyond. This edited collection speaks to cutting-edge realities of global regulation, securitization, sovereignty, territoriality, and the resistant, counter-actions of migrants and advocates worldwide.

In the opening chapter, DeGenova explores freedom of movement beyond a rights framework. DeGenova suggests that freedom be understood as rooted in basic human power and labor capacity, rather than through rights that carry their own political paradigm. This chapter introduces the framework of the volume that shifts attention from state preoccupation with regulating and restricting human mobility towards investigating what is meant by freedom of movement. DeGenova's introduction draws heavily on Agamben and Foucault. Although rich and detailed, his idea of freedom of movement is not highlighted as clearly throughout all the diverse contributions that follow as the deconstruction of deportation and deportability. Nevertheless, the trajectory from DeGenova through to Peter Nyers's closing chapter gives shape to a deep analysis and alternative conceptualizations of migration, exclusion, and the diverse effects of deportability as enactments of sovereign power. Deportation is shown in light of its constitutive relationship with the state, allowing scholars to "engage politically and theoretically in renewed ways with questions of freedom" (3).

The fourteen chapters of this book challenge deportation's accepted legitimacy and administrative role in global responses to migration. The book is exceptional in drawing connections between deportation's active role in global capitalism and the individualization that occurs with deportability—the protracted possibility of deportations. This individualization bears profoundly on individual lives, identities, and social relations in complicated, contradictory ways. Like the diverse experiences of migration, so too the spaces of exclusion highlighted through the lens of deportation provide an opportunity for alternative practices of freedom and identity creation in diverse and nuanced ways. For example, Nathalie Peutz's chapter is an ethnographic analysis of deportation in Somililand. Peutz considers the ways deportation creates new subjectivation and categorization, for example new identities and communities for those that have been deported. The citizen and the alien constitute each other as the experience of deportation comes up against other citizenship and is received in multiple ways—experiences of failure and being labeled "terrorists," but also heroism and mixed responses of celebration and suspicion upon their return. There is a performative aspect to the experience of deportation,

which occurs simultaneously with a persistent desire for legal recognition of people who caught in between two or more places. But the lack of legal status in one place, and lack of real connection or identity in the "returned" place means the struggle for recognition continues beyond expulsion from one place to the other. The authors remain mindful of the complicated realities when deportation is experienced figuratively and practically by all persons involved.

Following DeGenova's chapter is Part Two, "Sovereignty and Space." This section provides a historical, genealogical analysis of migration and deportation, which since World War One have become nationalized and, according to Walters, socialized through practices of excluding "undesirable" migrants and regulating labour migration based on national economic progress (10). Deportability is introduced as historically contingent (Walters), as a product of particular politics and administration, constitutive of nation-state identity (Karakayali & Rigo), and as vitally linked to modern territoriality (Cornelisse).

Part Three, "Spaces of Deportability," emphasizes the ongoing nature of movement and migration. For example, Andrijasevic writes of detention camps as deceleration zones in migration, not as a beginning or end to movement. The non-linear and constant presence of diverse migration flows are recurring themes in later chapters—particularly those that base their discussion on ethnographic work—and pose a significant challenge to migration discourse that frames movement as a unilateral "sending-receiving" relationship. Andrijasevic's chapter uses the example of movement in the Mediterranean, which is often only discussed in terms of migrants seeking entry into the European Union. In reality, migration in this region is multi-directional and fluid, and precedes EU formation. The subsequent chapters in this section draw on global examples from Mexico-United States, Bahrain and Kafala (a guest worker program in the Gulf), Tel Aviv, California, and more European case studies from Germany and Switzerland.

Part Four, "Forced Movement," examines cases of deportation. Refreshingly for those seeped in the literature on the horrors of deportation, the authors in this section (Bhartia, Coutin, Peutz) use fiction, ethnography, and narrative to complicate, but not discount, the violence of expulsion. These chapters speak to DeGenova's call for conceptualizing deportation in relation to state sovereignty, space, and freedom of movement. These authors, as well as many in Part Three, use ethnographic methodologies to bring to light the complexities of migration and deportation/deportability. In the final section, "Freedom," Nyers closes the volume with the concept of "Abject Cosmopolitanism." Seeking to understand the cosmopolitanism of marginalized ("abject") persons, Nyers suggests possibilities for hope through a Canadian case study where Algerians without status were successful in mobilizing for regularization. Nyers sees migration as a "critical moment of cosmopolitan dissent" (415). Through a discussion of "abject cosmopolitanism" (with reference to work by Bonnie Honig) he argues that deportable migrants "put the question of the speaking subject front and centre (…) as an object of radical retaking" (439). Although importantly, Nyers recognizes the ways "abject foreigners" can take political action, he does not acknowledge how these events are often exceptional legal circumstances, with little lasting effect on national laws, immigration or labor regulation.

The collection tends to focus on an arguably imagined notion of the state as a fixed, impermeable system. The experiences of migration and deportability are nuanced throughout the chapters. However, attention to the complexities within the "state" and the inconsistencies of exclusion

and legal application is perhaps overlooked. The state is often referred to as a definitive norm, which then renders the deportable foreigner as non-citizen, stateless and without a voice. While it is true that the violence of state sovereignty is death for many migrants, to suggest as DeGenova does, that deportability is akin to "bare life," disregards the active role that migrants can play not only in countering their deportability, but also in consenting to the experience of migration with precarious legal status and employment. Inequalities are persistent domestically and globally, and structurally contribute to the subjugation of irregular migrants. However, the complexities of migration are heightened when one considers the conscious actions of migrants in contrast to speaking of them as victims, resisting the state as subjugated voices. Further, the situation of "non-citizens" varies depending on one's position within the country of non-citizenship—the type of employment, whether one is considered high-skilled or low-skilled, as well as the consequences of deportation on that individual. It is not an experience that is easy to generalize.

Nevertheless, this anthology is timely and valuable for scholars and activists interested in digging beyond political discourse of migration regulation. Interdisciplinary and helpful not only for those focused specifically on deportation, this collection offers insight into sovereignty, territoriality, migration regulation, identity formation through migration, and critical perspectives on the governance of movement, citizenship and non-citizens.

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