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Deportation Studies: Origins, Themes and Directions

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The new field of deportation studies emerged at the intersection of immigration and security studies in the early 2000s. Focusing on deportation raises new questions about migration and enforcement tactics, but reproduces assumptions about the nature of movement and the centrality of the state in enforcement efforts. Through ethnographic work on deportation in various regions of the world, this volume questions these assumptions and emphasises important themes, including the role of emotions, the agency of migrants, the technicality of law and the variability of law. These themes also suggest several new and not-so-new directions for further research.

Keywords: Deportation; Ethnography; Emotion; Immigration; Security

The new field of deportation studies emerged at the intersection of immigration and security studies in the early 2000s, as immigration enforcement escalated in size, scope and technological sophistication. By the early 1990s, immigrant-receiving countries in various parts of the world ratcheted up their enforcement tactics (Cornelius, Martin, and Hollifield 1994; Walters 2002), restricting irregular migrants' access to employment and services (Perea 1997), militarising border crossings (Nevins 2002), imposing harsher sanctions on those who defied restrictions (Welch 2002) and expanding surveillance (Fassin 2011). Due to contradictory enforcement and humanitarian mandates, seeming humanitarian exceptions (Ticktin 2011) or opportunities for legalisation (Calavita 2005) have not always provided migrants with legal relief. In this context, scholars' attention was drawn to the intensified policing dedicated to detecting unauthorised migrants, the new detention-centre complexes constructed to hold those apprehended, the massive numbers of individuals displaced through deportation, the legal changes that propelled and accommodated these practices, the communities in sending and receiving societies that were impacted by deportations and, for all of its escalation, the inadequacy of deportation as a means of removing unauthorised immigrant populations that were vast in size (De Genova

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2002; Ellermann 2009; Peutz 2006; Willen 2007). Confronted with these phenomena, scholars began to ask why this intensified enforcement regime had been created, and with what impacts. With these questions, the field of deportation studies was born.

The focus of deportation studies is somewhat different from that of its cousin, immigration studies. Immigration scholars have examined why individuals immigrate, how well they become assimilated into the societies they join, the relationships that they maintain with their countries of origin, the ways that migration impacts both sending and receiving countries, the impacts of enforcement practices on immigrant communities, nativism and the racialisation of immigration and the increasingly transnational nature of immigrant families (see, e.g., Bach 1978; Basch, Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc 1994; Bean, Vernez, and Keely 1989; Bosniak 2000; Chavez 2008; Higham 1963; Inda 2008; Kearney 1986; Menjívar et al. 1998; Portes and Rumbaut 1990; Portes and Zhou 1993). At the risk of oversimplifying, early immigration literature started from the assumptions that immigration most often entailed leaving one country (usually in the Global South) and moving to another one (most often, in the Global North), that this was an act of volition on the part of the migrant and that movement was accompanied by a transfer (to at least some degree) of allegiance, family relationships and cultural practices. Migrants, it was also assumed, were conduits for new ideas that could transform their communities of origin. These assumptions were questioned by more recent research, which stressed that migration was multidirectional (Rouse 1991) and that choice was very much shaped by structural conditions and especially the labour market; whether immigration entailed a transfer of allegiance or the formation of a transnational social sphere was very much an open question. As a social practice, deportation further calls migration studies' originary assumptions into question (see Galvin 2014 and Drotbohm 2014). Deportation is forcible rather than voluntary, the decision to deport is in the hands of the state rather than that of individual migrants, the direction of movement is from so-called 'receiving' country to 'sending' country and definitions of 'origin' and 'membership' are disrupted by the act of removal. Indeed, even to refer to deportation as a form of migration challenges common understandings of this term. This contrast is even more striking given that some of the same questions raised in the field of migration studies—Who moves? With what effects? And will they become assimilated?—arise in the context of deportation.

Likewise, deportation studies raises new questions for security studies scholars. Security studies became consolidated during the cold war as an international relations subfield that focused centrally on the ways that states defended their core values from military threats posed by other nations (Krause and Williams 1996). In the post-cold war era, as threats became more diffuse in nature, took non-military as well as military forms and targeted subnational groups, the field of security studies both broadened and deepened, to examine a wider range of behaviours, tactics and entities, of both sub- and supranational varieties (Buzan and Hansen 2009). In the post-9/11 era, the focus shifted further from security to securitisation, that is, to studying the social process through which 'issues become "securitized," treated as security issues,

through these speech-acts which do not simply describe an existing security situation, but bring it into being as a security situation by successfully representing it as such' (Williams 2003, 513).[1] Securitisation is pervasive throughout society as numerous processes—e.g., financial transactions, immigration procedures, education—are deemed vulnerable to threats (theft, fraud, violence) and therefore incorporate measures designed to fight such threats. These measures include surveillance, identification technologies, policing tactics and the reconfiguration of physical space in ways that guide or prevent movement. Studying such developments makes it possible to examine shifts in security apparatuses, forms of governmentality, militarisation, spatialised enforcement tactics and new forms of subjectivity associated with these enforcement regimes (Amoore and de Goede 2008; Bigo 2002; Cole 2002; Dean 1999; Dow 2004; Hernandez-Lopez 2010; Mountz 2010). The rise in deportation and immigrant detention (Simon 1998) has drawn the attention of security scholars both because it is a component of the broader phenomena of infusing security issues into a variety of domains (Doty 1998) and because the security 'threat' posed by unauthorised migrants is generally low level or non-existent and therefore quite disproportionate to the security measures that have been adopted (Chavez 2008).

Scholars who study deportation have sought to explain the recent rise in immigration enforcement, attributing it to heightened fears associated with the war on terror, the prison-industrial-detention-centre complex's need to justify its existence, racialisation, scapegoating, and the needs of capitalism in the neoliberal era (De Genova 2002; De Genova and Peutz 2010; Inda 2008; Welch 2002, 2006). De Genova (2002), for example, argued that because, in the USA, it was almost impossible both physically and politically to remove the some 12 million unauthorised immigrants living in the country, deportation policies could not be attributed to this goal. Rather, De Genova contends, deportation produces deportability, that is, unauthorised migrants' awareness that they could be deported, an awareness that reduces unauthorised workers' capacity to challenge exploitative labour conditions. Scholars have also attended to the life conditions of those who undergo deportation, as well as the relatives of such individuals. Joanna Dreby (2012, 2013) found that children in Mexican immigrant families experienced a pervasive fear that their relatives would be deported, and therefore faced the future with uncertainty. Calling for an anthropology of removal, Nathalie Peutz (2006) discussed ways that Somalis' post-9/11 deportations underscored the suspicion at the root of deportation policies—US authorities deemed Somali remittances to family members to be potential contributions to terrorists. Elana Zilberg (2011) has examined the ways that deportations from the USA to El Salvador dispersed gang members, giving rise to transnational security scapes. Daniel Kanstroom (2012) has highlighted both the way that law fails to provide a remedy for individuals erroneously deported and the de facto deportation of US citizen children who, while not forbidden to remain in the USA, accompany their deported parents.

Through this and other research, deportation scholars have analysed the macro-level structures that shape enforcement regimes, the human experience of deportation and societal impacts of removal, but have also imported some assumptions derived

from both immigration and security studies. Analyses of deportation that draw on insights from immigration research have tended to treat deportation as a *move*, albeit one that occurs by force. This understanding of deportation-as-move implies that deportation is a discrete event, directs attention towards the deportee as the person who moves and highlights the significance of national borders in shaping subjectivity and mobility. In contrast, analyses that are grounded in the security literature treat deportation as an *enforcement event*. Such approaches emphasise the centrality of the state as the enforcement agent, and often draw heavily on Giorgio Agamben's (1998) notion of the state of exception, that is, the suspension of law in order to further the ends of law, as when civil liberties are suspended during a national emergency, a suspension that, according to Agamben, reinforces law itself and has become the norm, instead of an exception.[2] This idea resonates for deportation studies scholars given that deportees' legal rights are often limited (in the USA, for example, removal hearings are administrative proceedings that involve fewer constitutional protections than do criminal proceedings; see Eagly 2010), even as the need to restore law is often given as a justification for deportation. As well, analyses of securitisation tend to emphasise global inequalities, which in turn directs attention to removals from the Global North to the Global South. Though valuable in many ways, these influences could potentially lead deportation scholars to underestimate the roles of non-state actors, overemphasise deportees' powerlessness and disconnect deportation from the events and histories within which it is embedded.

By using ethnographic research to interrogate the understandings of deportation that have shaped deportation studies to date, the articles in this issue of the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* challenge these assumptions and thus break new theoretical ground. Most importantly, through research that accesses the lived experiences of deportation as well as the multiple actors and institutions involved, this issue broadens scholars' understandings of what deportation entails. Temporally, the work in this special issue emphasises that deportation is not a discrete event; rather, it begins long before an individual is apprehended, through the myriad practices that make someone vulnerable to deportation in the first place. As well, deportation continues long after an individual is returned, through the difficult process of readjustment, the ripple effects on family members and the continued prohibition on reentry. Tellingly, one deportee interviewed by Drotbohm (2014) referred to Cape Verde as 'Alcatraz', implying that returning 'home' was a continuation of an earlier period of incarceration (see also Coutin 2010). Deportations are also connected to earlier historical moments, such as political developments that lead individuals to migrate or that deny them legal access to territories of other nations (Coutin 2011), and to later ones, as when migrants' children's births cannot be registered, thus leading to yet another generation of 'documentless' individuals (Galvin 2014). Indeed, according to Galvin, Zimbabweans living in Botswana experience daily life as an effort to ward off deportation; thus, they continually anticipate, even as they try to avoid, this event. Such broadening also redirects

attention from the act of removal itself to other phases, such as the period between apprehension and removal (Hasselberg 2014).

Likewise, spatially, the notion of a 'deportation corridor' expands understandings of where and through which institutions deportation occurs (Drotbohm and Hasselberg 2014). This concept suggests that deportations involve and generate movements in multiple directions, not only to a deportee's country of origin via forcible return but also, perhaps, back to a former country of residence. Such multidirectionality of movement raises questions about what origin means—Can migrants be said to have 'originated' in their countries of birth, or do they originate in the countries to which they migrated, or do they have multiple origins (Galvin 2014; see also Yngvesson 2010)? Furthermore, deportation involves not only the state but also a host of other individuals and institutions, including employers who might report their workers, family members who accompany or are left behind, other relatives who receive or reject deportees, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that offer assistance or launch anti-deportation campaigns and more. Importantly, the papers investigate movements within the Global South as well as those between North and South.

Temporal and spatial broadening is linked to three other themes central to this special issue. The first is the role that emotions play within the process of deportation. A range of emotions and emotion-laden processes are considered, including adaptation, normalisation, stigma and anxiety. Migrants, authors demonstrate, experience uncertainty, given that they may not know whether they will be apprehended, what has happened to relatives taken into custody and what their future will hold if they are removed. Importantly, though, authors assess not only the emotional experiences of migrants, but also those of other groups, including sending communities, receiving communities, state actors and NGOs. The emotions that these groups experience are closely connected, in these analyses, to the fantasies that they seek to maintain. Thus, if individuals in immigrant-producing societies want to maintain their fantasies that migration is a pathway to progress, then they are more likely to stigmatise deportees as failures than to attribute deportation to conditions in the country from which deportees were removed (Schuster and Majidi 2014). Individuals who are subject to deportation sometimes distinguish themselves from other, more dangerous, individuals who are the ones who, they say, really deserve to be deported, and first-generation migrants sometimes regard the deportation of more recent arrivals as a slight against their own ethnic or racial group (Drotbohm 2014). Deportation policies may reveal anxieties that are common in the deporting nation. For example, Kalir (2014) analyses the ways that officials' denunciations of migrants as existential threats to the nation of Israel help to reproduce Israel's status as a Jewish state. Kalir argues that stigmatisations of migrants are thus linked to anxiety about anti-Semitic persecution, and that such critical rhetoric depoliticises the structural violence experienced by migrants. Even intermediaries, such as NGO representatives or care workers who provide services to detainees, perform 'emotion

work' as they carry out their institutional responsibilities while contending with the traumas recounted or performed by migrants (Fischer 2014).

A second theme is the agency of migrants and their advocates. Agency takes many forms, including organising one's life to minimise chances of being deported, creating support networks, sharing information about raids, launching anti-deportation campaigns, appealing an order of removal and returning following a deportation. These actions arise despite a number of double binds that constrain advocates' and migrants' activities. For instance, according to Kalir (2014), Israeli NGOs that appeal to Jewish history in order to generate compassion for migrants reproduce the very trauma that shapes officials' anti-immigrant rhetoric. Similarly, French care workers who work in deportation centres where some detainees resort to self-mutilations must navigate potential complicity with guards, who attempt to control detainees' behaviour, and adherence to humanitarian goals of respecting detainees' autonomy (Fischer 2014). And, in the UK, anti-deportation campaign organisers fail to acknowledge foreign-national offenders' senses that they may be partially to blame for their own legal predicaments (Hasselberg 2014). The pervasiveness of such double binds suggests that they may stem from overarching contradictions intrinsic to deportation, such as that between individuals' rights to have families and states' rights to control entry (Drotbohm 2014; see also Bosniak 1991), or that between humanitarianism and enforcement (Ticktin 2011). The questions posed by Maria, a foreign-national offender facing deportation from the UK and quoted by Hasselberg (2014), strike me as profound: 'When does a person stop being an ex-offender? I mean, please, somebody let me know. How many good deeds do I have to do to make up for my one bad deed?' Maria's questions capture the temporal contradiction inherent in having a criminal record: the very term 'ex-offender', which places an offence squarely in the past, simultaneously marks the designated person as 'offender' in the present and future (see also Stumpf 2006).

The third theme is that of legal technicalities. The articles in this special issue are replete with discussions of permits, policies and procedures that shape the emotions and agency described above. Galvin describes the 90-day entry permits that Zimbabwean migrants to Botswana can obtain. These permits shape Zimbabweans' experiences of legality and illegality, creating a spectrum of actual and potential statuses. The ways that Zimbabweans describe these permits, for instance, in the words of one interviewee, 'My days are finished', strike me as suggestive of life and death. In contrast, Israel granted Eritrean and Sudanese migrants group protection as temporary migrants, rather asylum, even though the former status is only supposed to be used in the case of sudden large-scale movements, which these were not (Kalir 2014). As a result, their status was unclear to employers, making it difficult for the migrants to obtain jobs. According to Kalir, the claim that Israel lacks refugees is a 'manufactured reality' that results precisely from institutional processes that fail to grant refugee status or asylum to individuals even when they are fleeing political violence. Attending to legal technicalities, as do these authors, denaturalises immigration categories, making it clear that rather than being intrinsically unauthorised, irregular, undocumented or illegal,

people are constituted as such through a process of illegalisation (see also De Genova and Peutz 2010).

This special issue's focus on broadening understandings of deportation and its discussion of emotions, agency and legal technicalities suggest several new and not-so-new directions for further research. First, this work suggests the importance of studying normalisation. If, by demarcating the exceptional and the prohibited, deportation simultaneously produces the normal, then examining the boundaries that deportation establishes sheds light on the contours of the citizenry. In this sense, deportation scholarship can partake of a longer theoretical tradition of studying aberrant cases or instances of trouble in order to discern the norms against which they are measured (Llewellyn and Hoebel 1941; Merry 1984; Yngvesson 1993). Such a focus is made all the more compelling by some of the data presented in this special issue. For instance, in Galvin's material (2014), there is a jarring juxtaposition of daily routines (sleeping, nursing a baby) and a sudden abduction and deportation. Likewise, Hasselberg (2014) quotes an interviewee who insisted, 'So yes, they should deport people, but dangerous people, people that already have records of being criminal'. When and how did it become normal for deportation to appear to be an appropriate response to crime, given that exile and transportation are no longer acceptable criminal penalties (Bleichmar 1999; Kanstroom 2000)? What assumptions about borders, membership, territory and alienage are implicated in this statement? And how does law become the basis for consequences (banishment) that have been deemed archaic?

A second and not-so-new question inspired by the work in this special issue is, Why are deportations escalating? Again, material presented by these authors repeatedly emphasises the irrationality of deportation. Drotbohm's contribution is a case in point. One of the legal advocates she interviewed stated:

> This is a crazy situation. This government supports the right to family life.… But then, if people are undocumented, they don't have any kinds of rights and are deported—although their family members may be citizens. This is not logical.… Some years later the same child may file a petition for his father, and the father eventually may join his son. But when the son is still a minor, his father is deported. And then the government invests millions of dollars into child protective services, programs for immigrant children with psychological difficulties, and all this. I mean, justice is something else, you know what I mean?

While this speaker concludes by emphasising the injustice of the circumstances described, his initial statement, 'This is a crazy situation', may be more telling. Why, if deportation is so counterproductive, does it occur, and on a massive scale? Explanations such as capitalism's need to produce deportability in order to render migrants exploitable (De Genova 2002), though persuasive, seem insufficient to account for the dynamics described by this legal advocate. Instead, if deportation is irrational, then perhaps explanations need to examine the fantasies that are made possible through deportation. What investments, whether material or psychological,

require stigmatised others in order to persist? How do non-migrants' senses of self depend on the foil of the criminalised alien? How do deportations reinvigorate such irrationalities over time?

Finally, and this is also not a new question, reflecting on the work that is presented here leads me to wonder how the field of deportation studies is enabled by the very alienation and dislocation that scholars analyse and critique. This is, of course, a broad question, encountered in a range of scholarly work that attempts to accurately depict violence and suffering without sensationalising violence or engaging in intellectual voyeurism (see, e.g., Bourgois 1996, 2003, for a discussion of these issues). The contributors to this issue ably present the lives of migrants, deportees and others without falling into either of these traps. Yet, a question that could be explored further in future ethnographic work on deportation is whether, despite presumably vast differences in ethnographers' and deportees' social positions, affinities associated with 'foreignness' facilitate these ethnographic encounters. If so, what are the fieldwork moments when those affinities become irreconcilable incompatibilities (as, e.g., when an ethnographer is able to travel where an interlocutor cannot)? And how do ethnographies of deportation speak to the multiple audiences that move into and out of the corridor of deportation?

Examining such questions will help to expand deportation studies to include a focus on the production of the society that deports, the fantasies implicated in deportation and the (re)encounters that ethnography makes possible. By directing scholars' attention to deportation, anxiety, and justice, and to the value of ethnography as a means of explicating these interrelated phenomena, the contributors to this special issue have advanced not only deportation studies, but also the fields from which it derives.

Acknowledgements

Notes

[1]   As well, Doty (1998) defines 'securitisation' as:

a process through which the definition and understanding of a particular phenom-enon, its consequences, and the policies/courses of action deemed appropriate to address the issue are subjected to a particular logic. The kind of logic that drives securitization of an issue leads to certain kinds of politics which are associated with particular realms of policy options…. The issues of immigration, especially undocu-mented immigration, and refugee movements are prominent among those being securitized today. (71–72)

[2]   As Agamben explains, the state of exception not only distinguishes what within the juridico-political order from that which is outside but also 'traces a threshold (the state of exception) between the two, on the basis of which inside and outside, the normal situation and chaos,

enter into those complex topological relations that make the validity of the juridical order possible' (1998, 19).

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