



Contesting Citizenship: Irregular Migrants and New Frontiers of the Political

Anne McNevin

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Irregular migrants complicate the boundaries of citizenship and stretch the parameters of political belonging. Comprised of refugees, asylum seekers, "illegal" labor migrants, and stateless persons, this group of migrants occupies new sovereign spaces that generate new subjectivities. Investigating the role of irregular migrants in the transformation of citizenship, Anne McNevin argues that irregular status is an immanent (rather than aberrant) condition of global capitalism, formed by the fast-tracked processes of globalization.

McNevin casts irregular migrants as more than mere victims of sovereign power, shuttled from one location to the next. Incorporating examples from the United States, Australia, and France, she shows how migrants reject their position as "illegal" outsiders and make claims on the communities in which they live and work. For these migrants, outsider status operates as both a mode of subjectification and as a site of active resistance, forcing observers to rethink the enactment of citizenship. McNevin connects irregular migrant activism to the complex rescaling of the neoliberal state. States increasingly prioritize transnational market relations that disrupt the spatial context for citizenship. At the same time, states police their borders in ways that reinvigorate territorial identities. Mapping the broad dynamics of political belonging in a neoliberal era, McNevin provides invaluable insight into the social and spatial transformation of citizenship, sovereignty, and power.

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