In this comparative study of the contemporary politics of deportation in Germany and the United States, Antje Ellermann analyzes the capacity of the liberal democratic state to control individuals within its borders. The book grapples with the question of why, in the 1990s, Germany responded to vociferous public demands for stricter immigration control by passing and implementing far-reaching policy reforms, whereas the United States failed to respond effectively to a comparable public mandate. Drawing on extensive field interviews, Ellermann finds that these cross-national differences reflect institutionally determined variation in socially coercive state capacity. By tracing the politics of deportation across the evolution of the policy cycle, beginning with anti-immigrant populist backlash and ending in the expulsion of migrants by street-level bureaucrats, Ellermann is also able to show that the conditions underlying state capacity systematically vary across policy stages. Whereas the ability to make socially coercive law is contingent on strong institutional linkages between the public and legislators, implementation depends on the political insulation of bureaucrats.

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States Against Migrants

Deportation in Germany and the United States

ANTJE ELLERMANN
University of British Columbia
In memory of my mother, Ruthild Ellermann, and for Ruby Skye, whose journey has just begun
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