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978-1-107-04159-2 - Constructing Immigrant “Illegality”: Critiques, Experiences, and Responses

Edited by Cecilia Menjívar and Daniel Kanstroom

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Constructing Immigrant “Illegality” *Critiques, Experiences, and Responses*

The topic of “illegal” immigration has been a major aspect of public discourse in the United States and many other immigrant-receiving countries. From the beginning of its modern invocation in the early twentieth century, the often ill-defined epithet of human “illegality” has figured prominently in the media; in vigorous public debates at the national, state, and local levels; and in presidential campaigns. In this collection of essays, contributors from a variety of disciplines – anthropology, law, political science, religious studies, and sociology – examine how immigration law shapes immigrant illegality; how the concept of immigrant illegality is deployed and lived; and how its power is wielded and resisted. The authors conclude that the current concept of “immigrant illegality” is in need of sustained critique, as careful analysis will aid policy discussions and lead to more just solutions.

Cecilia Menjívar is Cowden Distinguished Professor at the T. Denny Sanford School of Social and Family Dynamics at Arizona State University. In her work she has examined the social consequences of immigration enforcement and how the law positions immigrants to live in legal ambiguity. She is the author of *Enduring Violence: Ladina Women’s Lives in Guatemala* (2011) and *Fragmented Ties: Salvadoran Immigrant Networks in America* (2000).

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Edited by

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32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University’s mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107041592

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First published 2014

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data

Constructing immigrant “illegality”: critiques, experiences, and responses / [edited by] Cecilia Menjívar, Daniel Kanstroom.
pages cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-04159-2 (Hardback)

1. Illegal aliens—United States. 2. United States—Emigration and immigration—Government policy. 3. Immigration enforcement—United States. 4. Emigration and immigration law—United States. I. Menjívar, Cecilia, editor of compilation. II. Kanstroom, Dan, editor of compilation.

JV 6483.C57 2013

325.73—dc23 2013024147

ISBN 978-1-107-04159-2 Hardback

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“The real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the workings of institutions that appear to be both neutral and independent, to criticize and attack them in such a manner that the political violence that has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight against them.”

Michel Foucault, *The Chomsky-Foucault
Debate: On Human Nature*

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Acknowledgments

As is usually the case with book projects, this book rests upon the efforts of several people and upon various types of institutional support. We wish to acknowledge them all here but apologize in advance if we inadvertently leave out someone who deserves our gratitude.

First, we would like to thank the Ford Foundation for funding a workshop in March 2011 held in San Francisco that Cecilia Menjívar and Manuel Vásquez organized. Manuel was particularly instrumental in facilitating this gathering, and we want to thank him for his efforts. We also thank the Tides Foundation in San Francisco for hosting us on their beautiful premises. Several of the contributors to this book came together for a day-long critical discussion about the category of illegality, and it was during those conversations that the specific idea for this book began to develop. Menjívar would also like to express gratitude for the Cowden Professorship funds; to William McDonald and Priyanka Mohanty for critical assistance in the last stages of this project; and to the Comparative Border Studies initiative at Arizona State University for additional funding. Kanstroom particularly thanks the Boston College Law School Fund, Interim Dean George Brown, and Dean Vincent Rougeau. This book would not exist without these sources of support.

We are deeply grateful to Robert Dreesen, our editor at Cambridge University Press, whose encouragement from early on, and dedication and guidance throughout this process have been vital, thorough, supportive, and invariably helpful. We would also like to thank our reviewers for their very thoughtful suggestions and detailed comments. Even in the rare instances when we have not followed their suggestions, their insights have been tremendously helpful. We also thank Abigail Zorbaugh and

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Acknowledgments

Liz Janetschek at Cambridge for their support in ushering this project to completion and our copy editor, Christine Dunn, for her fine editing skills and patience.

Finally, we would like to thank all the contributors to this volume for their wonderful spirit of collaboration, enthusiasm, and prompt replies to the multiple requests we made throughout this process. Our most basic hope is that the work we have collaboratively produced will serve to redirect critical focus away from the individuals who today are blamed for the conditions into which they have been pushed and toward the legal structures, policy decisions, and rhetorical ploys that have created the various spaces of illegality we see today. It is to the individuals and families who live in these spaces and to their future welfare that we humbly dedicate this book.

All the royalties from this book will be donated to NDLO, the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, and to MIRA, the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, to support their work for immigrants’ civil, labor, and human rights.