

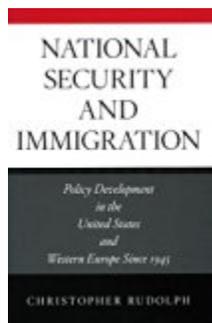


Christopher Rudolph. *National Security and Immigration: Policy Development in the United States and Western Europe since 1945*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2006. 288 pp. \$58.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8047-5377-7.

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Immigration Policy as a Response to Geopolitical Threats

National security and migration and border policies have always been intrinsically linked as policy issues. However, few scholars have actually paid attention to the inherent connection between these two policy fields. In *National Security and Immigration*, political scientist Christopher Rudolph presents a first analysis of this relationship. He compares the United States, Germany, France, and Great Britain between 1945 and 2001. He subdivides his research into four periods: early Cold War (1945-mid 1960s); transition to *détente* (1970s and 1980s); post-Cold War (1990-2001); and post-September 11, 2001.

Rudolph explains the relationship between migration policies and national security by turning away from the traditional understanding of the term “national security,” which is used in realist international relations theories. This theory takes the sovereignty of the state as its point of departure. Instead, he prefers a description that includes economic, military, and societal aspects of security. Rudolph uses the concept “societal security,” coined and defined by political scientist Ole Wæver as the cultural construction of security through language, culture, association, and religious and national identity and customs. Such cultural aspects can heavily influence a state’s policy toward national security. Nationalism, for example, provides an important factor in the construction of security interests, since, in a strong nationalistic state, people will easily unite against foreign enemies—real or constructed ones.

But security policy spills over into other fields as well. In “grand strategies” toward migration and border policy, in the United States, Germany, France, and Great Britain, national security and the perception of geopolitical threat play important roles. Rudolph introduces two significant suggestions for a better and more fruitful relationship between the two fields. The first one is the “Threat Hypothesis”: “as geopolitical threats increase, policies regarding international labor mobility (migration) should become relatively more open in order to facilitate the production of wealth to support defense” (p. 31). The second one is coined the “Rally Hypothesis”: in times of threats, people rally together, create a common identity, and turn to nationalism instead of xenophobia. A high degree of external threat thus results in “more open migration policies and a declining emphasis on ethno-cultural entry criteria” (pp. 31-32).

According to Rudolph, the four states acted in line with both hypotheses. They had open immigration policies in the beginning of the Cold War, when the Soviet threat was high, while during the period of international *détente* in the 1970s, a more restrictive policy was announced. Immigration was considered a societal problem, and anti-immigrant resentments and societal difficulties did not arise before these years. After the end of the Cold War, the societal aspect of security became more important as the Communist geopolitical threat diminished. Closure and restrictions dominated. At this point, the two hypotheses no longer apply. After 9/11, although

new geopolitical threats arrived, migration policies have not opened up to immigrants. On the contrary, more and more countries close their borders and implement heavier restrictions for political refugees (let alone for economic ones). So, what is the difference? Rudolph sees a major distinction between the pre- and post-9/11 periods. Prior to 2011, each nation-state defined its own security. Nowadays, the countries of the European Union no longer have room to maneuver; they have to accept border politics, the European Arrest Warrant, and immigration restrictions as provided to them by the European Commission and/or Parliament. Moreover, the perception of insecurity itself is linked to ethno-cultural aspects. Migrants no longer are an irrelevant factor in threat construction; they themselves pose a threat to national security.

The model Rudolph has constructed is ingenious and original, but from a historical perspective it raises several questions. First, projecting one model on four totally different states is daring. Rudolph compares the United States, Germany, France, and Great Britain, and legitimizes his decision by pointing out that these states had common economic and geopolitical interests, and that their concept of “societal security” was socially contested. It nevertheless is debatable whether these four states really had so many common interests throughout the postwar period. Their historical backgrounds and geopolitical positions differed quite extensively, and it is hard to imagine Great Britain and Germany sharing the same visions on and approaches to immigration politics. Rudolph seems to be aware of this at some point. First, he points out that the United States in the 1950s accepted refugees because of its strong economical approach toward migration policy. It also served ideological goals, since the acceptance of immigrants accommodated the Truman Doctrine. The Federal Republic of Germany, secondly, viewed migration mainly from a reconstruction point of view. Politically, the young republic had to construct a whole new idea of national community, in a country that was partly divided and in which “Germanhood” was deeply discredited. The Federal Republic of Germany’s main goals were economic reconstruction and internal stability. Within this context, the West German government introduced a guest workers’ program to invite immigrants to contribute to the economic “Wiederaufbau.” France, for its turn, decided on a liberal immigration policy, not because of ideological or political reasons, but because of its demographic weaknesses. After World War II, it was “populate or perish” for the French. The country desperately needed immi-

grants to recover from the war and to support its economic expansion. And lastly, Great Britain’s main reason for accepting migrants from the commonwealth was not so much an issue of economical or Cold War politics, but an attempt to uphold its image of an empire. Immigrants served to underline Britain’s persistent role as a world power, next to the United States. In short, it is interesting and perhaps fruitful to compare these nations in their motives for immigration politics, but it is difficult to pinpoint what Rudolph wants us to learn exactly from this comparison.

Rudolph’s Threat Hypothesis is very interesting. Rudolph states that geopolitical threats automatically lead to more attention to the economy, because only when an economy is well developed, a state will have enough resources to build up its defense apparatus. This hypothesis is based on the assumption that the Cold War first and foremost was a military conflict and that threats directly translate into a military buildup. However, the Cold War cannot solely be explained in military terms; it was a social and cultural conflict as well. The Threat Hypothesis also implies that the only premise for a military buildup was a well-functioning economy. Nevertheless, the state’s inhabitants had to support this military buildup. Military measures could be blocked, when people disagreed with the official threat perception (as the Dutch protests against the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Double Track Decision in the early 1980s illustrate). It is remarkable that Rudolph does not pay more attention to these cultural aspects in his Threat Hypothesis, since he claims to use a more social concept of “national security.”

To conclude, in *National Security and Immigration* too much attention is paid to the “state” as an abstract actor. Rudolph clings to a rather structural approach and does not include more subjective actors and their interests in the decision-making process around national security. In addition, he takes official proclaimed threats for granted and does not ask himself why states constructed these threats to national security. For example, in the Netherlands, the Dutch government sometimes projected the threat of Communist uprisings on Indonesian immigrants. This threat was inspired by the crisis of colonialism and the Dutch counterinsurgency efforts in Indonesia in the late 1940s. Threat construction therefore was not so much a product of rational and materialist “bean counting” (of missiles or foreign soldiers of other power resources), but also a product of cultural antagonisms, historical feuds, and ideological preferences. Apart from these shortcomings, *National Security and Im-*

migration is a good read for historians, because it offers some new and prickling insights into the nexus of migration policies and national security in the United States, Germany, France, and Great Britain since 1945.

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