



For Kin or Country: Xenophobia, Nationalism, and War

Stephen M. Saideman, R. William Ayres

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The collapse of an empire can result in the division of families and the redrawing of geographical boundaries. New leaders promise the return of people and territories that may have been lost in the past, often advocating aggressive foreign policies that can result in costly and devastating wars. The final years of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, the end of European colonization in Africa and Asia, and the demise of the Soviet Union were all accompanied by war and atrocity.

These efforts to reunite lost kin are known as irredentism ? territorial claims based on shared ethnic ties made by one state to a minority population residing within another state. *For Kin or Country* explores this phenomenon, investigating why the collapse of communism prompted more violence in some instances and less violence in others. Despite the tremendous political and economic difficulties facing all former communist states during their transition to a market democracy, only Armenia, Croatia, and Serbia tried to upset existing boundaries. Hungary, Romania, and Russia practiced much more restraint.

The authors examine various explanations for the causes of irredentism and for the pursuit of less antagonistic policies, including the efforts by Western Europe to tame Eastern Europe. Ultimately, the authors find that internal forces drive irredentist policy even at the risk of a country's self-destruction and that xenophobia may have actually worked to stabilize many postcommunist states in Eastern Europe.

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