

Refuge

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States and Strangers: Refugees and Displacements of Statecraft

By Nevzat Soguk

University of Minnesota Press, March 1999; Cloth ISBN 0-8166-3166-2; \$62.95;
Paper ISBN 0-8166-3167-0; \$24.95; 340 pages; indexed

States and Strangers looks at the role of refugees in international relations.

Refugees may flee their country, but can they escape the conflicting, defining logic of all voices that speak for them? As refugees multiply in our troubled world, more and more scholars, studies, and pundits focus on their plight. Most of these attempts, says Nevzat Soguk, start from a model that shares the assumptions manifested in traditional definitions of citizen, nation, and state. Within this hierarchy, he argues, a refugee has no place to go. *States and Strangers* questions this paradigm, particularly its vision of the territoriality of life.

A radical retheorization of the refugee from Foucauldian perspective, the book views the international refugee regime not as a simple tertiary response, arising from the practice of states regarding refugee problems, but as itself an aspect of the regimentation of statecraft. The attendant discourse negates the multiplicity of refugee events and experience; by assigning the refugee an identity—someone without the citizen's grounding within a territorial space—the state renders him voiceless and deprives him of representation and protection. *States and Strangers* asks how this happens and how it can be avoided.

Using historical, archival research and interpretive strategies drawn from a genealogical approach, Soguk considers the role of the refugee in the emergence and maintenance of the sovereign territorial state form the late seventeenth century to contemporary times.

Nevzat Soguk is assistant professor of political science at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

"States and Strangers comes down from the heights of the lofty ivory tower to combine sophisticated theoretical significance with the concerns of real people as they navigate their daily existence in worlds that both scholars and policy makers often ignore. Professor Soguk successfully integrates scholarly rigor with the desire to create a space that reflects the humanity, dignity, and capacity for agency that refugees possess. *States and Strangers* ranks among the best in engaged scholarship."

Roxanne Doty, Arizona State University, and author of *Imperial Encounters*

"This book is an important contribution to understanding how refugees as outsiders help in the discourse of national consciousness and are a crucial element in modern statecraft. Soguk takes the refugee experience as a metaphor for the modern condition and problematizes the categorization of refugees outside the traditional confines of nation-state citizenship. By rereading certain historical events such as the Huguenot displacement and the creation of the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Soguk offers a new perspective on the relationship between human flows, the practice of statecraft, and the international system. This is a challenging work that goes beyond traditional analyses of the development of the refugee regime to question the state-centric/territorial basis of that regime."

Daniel Warner, Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva, Switzerland

