



CCIS | Center for Comparative Immigration Studies

A New Age of Migration?: September 11th, Covid-19, and the Politics of Migration Regulation in Europe and the US

Tuesday, November 8, 2022 | 11:00AM - 12:30PM Pacific Time

In-person Event Only | ERC Conference Room 115



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Gallya Lahav is Associate Professor of Political Science at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and Visiting Scholar at the CCIS. She writes and teaches on international migration and European integration, and has been the recipient of several awards, including the MacArthur Foundation, the NSF, and the Mellon Foundation. Among her many books, book chapters, peer-reviewed articles, and edited volumes, Lahav is also co-author (with A. Messina) of *Immigration, Security, and the Liberal State: The Politics of Migration Regulation in Europe and the US* (Cambridge University Press, 2023 forthcoming).

This talk explains why the effects of the Covid-19 health pandemic on immigration regulation in Europe and the US closely parallel those of September 11th. It proposes that both negative focusing events are illuminated by a security-driven threat politics paradigm (Lahav and Messina 2023 forthcoming) that reflect a 'critical juncture' of the post-Cold War period which continues through the present. Its central argument is that the framing of immigration as a security threat has prompted liberal democratic states to enlist non-central state actors, adopt special legal regimes and enforcement strategies that transcend the normal decision-making processes and politics in ways that undermine human mobility and rights. Based on various sources of evidence, including longitudinal public opinion and elite surveys, discourse analyses, as well as policy tracing, I briefly show that over the last 20 years, as migration has become increasingly associated with public safety and physical security, citizens are more likely to support restrictions on human mobility and civil liberties. Contrary to the conventional scholarly wisdom (Hollifield 1992; 2008; Bhagwati 2003; Sassen 1996), contemporary liberal states and national policy-makers can exercise considerable control over immigration and human mobility flows because they are sanctioned by their consensual and threatened publics to adopt modes of implementation that compromise the liberal values and norms that underpinned state immigration and human mobility policy during most of the post-WWII period.

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