

Changing Migration Mobility and Migration Policies During the Covid-19 Process

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Abstract

This study was created to reveal the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on migration mobility and migration policies. In this study, which was created in a theoretical context, migration movements were tried to be explained in three stages: pre-epidemic, epidemic process, and post-epidemic context. The social isolation measures implemented on a global scale at the beginning of the pandemic showed that the actors reduced their social practices from the public sphere to the private sphere in the coronavirus process, which exhibited a social change. The pandemic process was left out of the international agenda of migration movements, and the problems experienced by immigrants were ignored. It is thought that the epidemic, which is a state of social change, has the characteristics of a global pandemic and that after the epidemic, anti-immigrant sentiment has increased, and migration mobility will change. Illusions in the social structure that immigrant individuals will increase the epidemic trigger anti-immigration.

Keywords

Coronavirus, Social isolation, Covid-19 process, Migration mobility, Anti-immigration

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Introduction

All vogue words tend to share a similar fate: the more experiences they pretend to make transparent, the more they themselves become opaque.

(Bauman, 1998:1)

According to Parsons (2005), society, which is the socialization set in which it exists as a system, corresponds to the relationality that ensures the continuity of the normative order and includes social sub-systems, structures, and integrities. Society appears in the modern paradigm as a structure that includes global fluidity, permeability, and changes. Social structures have been expressed in many concepts as a result of social changes such as traditional to modern, post-modern, risk society, and network societies. Structural integrity and social development are important for the function and conservation of the cluster. Social developments have carried the existing normative order to another point and ensured the linearity of the historical process in the integrity of roles, norms, values, and associations. According to the sociologists who advocate the confrontational approach, it corresponds to the incomprehensible ambiguity of the social developments rather than the irregularity in the current structure. When considered from a Marxist perspective, social changes bring about successive conflicts. According to Zizek, social changes carry a risk that they have not encountered before in the capitalist social order (Alp, 2007).

Thanks to the information structures that developed in the social system in the 18th century, social developments gained speed, and the formation of the enlightenment tradition developed. Bauman's view of social changes is as follows: *"to live under conditions of permanent and irreparable uncertainty; the existence of an unlimited number of ways of life in competition with it, which cannot prove that the claims are based on a more robust and binding basis than their historically formed customs"* (Bauman, 1996:145). The reliance on enlightenment, science, and technique has created modernization, industrialization, and ultimately the risk society, which is the concept of Ulrich Beck (1992), by throwing societies at a blind level of development.

The level of social development has unconsciously legitimized social risks by ensuring their existence under the concept of globalization. According to the point reached today, it is possible to provide the reflectivity of Beck according to the analysis, and what kind of consequences globalization has on

societies. The social field takes the results of the development level that started with the hands of man. Developing artificial intelligence, increasing information pollution, ecological risks affecting human and environmental health, and migration chains caused by economic and politically oriented inequalities constitute one of the most important indicators of the outcomes of risk society or globalization. On the other hand, the social structure is more discrete and alienated than ever before. The global uniculturalism has triggered the role confusion and the commitment of the actors to the classes to which they belong. Economic inequalities that have prevailed since the earliest times have widened class differences in modern society, corresponding to capitalism. In the context of class difference, B. Boran stated that the power that forms the basis of the social structure is class differences depending on the production relations, *“To see the issues in terms of the social structure means to look at them in terms of production forces, relations and the social classes that these relations create”* (Boran, 2016:4). The development of class differences consolidated migration networks on the basis of the central environment theory.

According to Wallerstein’s (2014) statement, the social structure that got rid of the space-time separation and became a global village within the concept of McLuhan (2015) brought the inevitable result of mass migrations that occurred in the light of current social developments. However, the social system is faced with another problem in the risk society as a result of globalization. In the first quarter of the 21st century, the coronavirus, which is an infectious disease that sets an example of a pandemic in terms of its social prevalence exceeding the continental shelf, has been the most obvious result of globalization and risk society. The fact that the coronavirus, which presents an example that globalization cannot be limited, rapidly surrounded the whole world, and was described by Giddens (2010) as one of the risks produced with the concept.

Covid-19 which creates the agenda with the loss of lives in every region of the world in terms of its global prevalence shelved the usual daily practices of the social order. The clearest example of this situation corresponds to the changing appearance of migration policies and migration movements that formed the world agenda before the mass prevalence of the epidemic. According to Sirkeci and Yüceşahin (2020), there is a close relationship between the “unlimited” spreading rate of the epidemic and global migration mobility. The authoritarian position of medicine, due to its effects on the public health, ensured

social dominance in this process dominated by the coronavirus, causing individuals and societies not to see the big picture in the social sense. During the epidemic process, the prevention of both national and international mobility of the actors and the limitation of daily mobility at the micro level caused the appearance of migration to be ignored for all nation-states.

While migration mobility constitutes the social agenda only days before the epidemic, it has an invisible position away from the agenda in the global big picture during the epidemic process. On the other hand, the spreading rate of migration and the restriction of the daily actions that individuals are accustomed to the fluidity, according to Sirkeci et al. (2020), may cause the perceptions that the spread of epidemics has increased due to migration and cause it to fuel anti-immigration. In addition, it can be said that the inequality of individuals and societies that have class positions according to the forms of economic, cultural, and social capital, the priority of public health in general, the inevitable effect of the epidemic and the quarantine process, it can be said that inequalities affect their appearance. As a matter of fact, Beck's concept of risk society also meets the idea that risks will affect individuals from all social strata (Beck, 1992). For this reason, it can be said that it creates a situation to change the direction and size of migration mobility, which is mostly caused by economic inequality.

According to Comte's perspective, the concept of the future is that it will contain a single formation that will replace national identities with loyalty to humanity, guided by transnational universal values (Comte, 1976:168; Ray, 2002:4). The formation process of a single and universal cultural unity constitutes the basis of globalization approaches. At the same time, it is due to the formation of universal cultural values or the melting pot of cultural values, which creates the chains of migration and in terms of cultural adaptation in the process of migration mobility, less difficulty in cultural conflicts in different social integrity compared to the pre-modern period. When today's migration chains are considered, it can be said that economic crises and employment opportunities have developed due to political bases stemming from war or conflict. On the other hand, in the development of modern society, Marx, of course, predicted that a global capitalist society could exist. The primary reason for globalization is the international development of capitalism. Marx and Engels (1969) mentioned that the historical mission of capitalism will begin

with “the destruction of the walls of China,” that global freedom of trade and developing world markets can destroy national differences (Ray, 2002). It can be said that the development and inevitability of today’s migration network is due to the unlimited networks of capitalist production and monopolies in the globalization paradigm.

Globalized order, which develops in a single and universal culture and provides a global network, threatens individuals and societies with two main consequences. The first is the destruction of the culture and tradition, which was built in the process of the nation-state and previously social accumulation, and the other is the individuals, societies, and masses who are in migration mobility between places with global fluidity. It can be said that the first one is challenging the societies as an inevitable risk, but the second one, migration movement, is carried out within the special and global policies of the states in order to prevent the social problems that it will cause. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the disintegration of communism, the development of capitalism, and therefore the results of globalization have spread to large masses. On the other hand, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the increase in consumption and the formation of a consumption culture, such as the attacks on Bauman (1998) and the Twin Towers, as well as the views of terrorist elements and movements and the views of Baudrillard (2004), are the cause of many dangers, such as economic crises and global security problems. Moreover, researchers stated that there are indicators that globalization has become a risk society.

Adapting to epidemic measures as a result of the restriction of social actions during the social isolation process reminds Giddens of his saying that “*being human is actually always knowing what he is doing and why he is doing it under this or that definition*” (Giddens, 2010: 53; Binay, 2014: 146). The continuation of social life under global constraints has enabled the development of the process under the control of the scientific knowledge authorities of the actors within the framework of action theory.

Society is already in the process of self-reflecting modernization, and now risks are inevitable, and uncertainties are positioned especially in the public sphere. While migration dynamics constitute the agenda with the most basic problems of societies in terms of changing the social order and creating conflicts, the coronavirus epidemic emerges as the most dangerous result of the global risk society, and the current appearance of the social order consists of ambiguities.

Beyond class inequalities and advanced societies, the coronavirus causes hundreds of thousands of casualties worldwide, affecting public health without distinguishing between position, capital and stratum. The fact that the global pandemic causes loss of life in developed societies has created the assumptions that social inequalities will disappear. It is on the world agenda as a phenomenon that was postponed due to the migration movements and policies applied against migration movements that were carried out before the Covid-19 process due to the fact that life reached a halt during the pandemic process. The counterpart of this situation itself constitutes an example of the situation of 167 countries closing their borders within the scope of the epidemic measure since April 2020 (UNCHR, 2020). Or there is a situation where asylum requests made to countries with a high level of welfare are abolished and their borders are closed, and the requirements of the Geneva Convention are suspended.

The widespread prevalence of the coronavirus pandemic, which has serious effects on public health, has deeply shaken the daily lives of individuals and societies. Undoubtedly, the global epidemic had a great impact on migration movements as well as all social systems. In this study, migration mobility will be discussed, including pre-pandemic, pandemic process, and post-pandemic projections. This study has three stages: as its main problem and scope, the existence of migration policies and migration mobility before the epidemic is based on the current change during the epidemic process, and a theoretical method that includes the period of uncertainty as the post-epidemic migration mobility has been determined. In this respect, primarily from the perspective of migration policies, nation-state building in the modernization process has created coexistence providers in global policies, while limiting states within national identities and integrities. Organizations such as the United Nations, NATO, and OECD have set an example of the search for common policies and an order established to ensure the continuity of global structuring. In the social order that has become a global village, it has created social migration networks far beyond the pre-modern or the first stage of modernity. In the first stage of modernity, it is said that the nation-state process with certain limits has changed.

Covid - Pre-19 Global Migration Policies

It can be said that the social structure before the coronavirus went through a turbulent period due to migration movements and political sanctions against

migration movements. According to Castles (2010), mass migration movements occur in a fluid and disciplined manner. Migration mobility mostly develops in the form of mass and chain migration and within the framework of push and pull factors as stated by Everett Lee (1969) in the push-pull theory. The seven laws in which Ravenstein (1885) mentioned the development of mass migration flows in his work titled *Immigration Laws on the phenomenon of immigration* are summarized as follows (Özcan, 2016:189):

a. “Most migrants migrate only to places over short distances. The resulting migration flows are directed towards the major commercial and industrial centers that attract migrants.

b. The natural result of this movement, which is limited among the settlements, but is general throughout the country, is the increase in migration from the regions close to the cities to the cities in line with the absorption process, and the filling of the empty rural areas by those coming from farther distances, and this causes a process of dispersal of the country.

c. This propagation process is similar to the process that engulfs migrations, though in reverse.

d. Every migration stream creates a compensating counter current.

e. Long-distance migrants often choose one of the larger commercial or industrial centers.

f. People living in rural areas of the country are more likely to migrate than those living in urban areas.

g. Women are more likely to migrate than men over short distances. Men are more prone to long distance migration.”

Global migration mobility develops on the basis of the center-periphery relationship in the contemporary social plane. Due to the attractive factors of the central countries, there are individual and mass migration flows from neighboring countries. In this respect, considering the 21st century migration movements, global migration mobility takes place towards the European countries and the USA, which are in the center. Due to their central position and the limited vital opportunities of the surrounding countries, migration mobility has gained an inexhaustible dimension. At the same time, the

multidimensional appearance of today's migration movements takes place outside of the usual reasons for migration to developing countries as well as to European countries and the USA. As Castles stated (Castles, 2008: 283), the fragmentation in the labor market and business networks brought about by digitalization, the ease of transportation on a global scale and the loss of importance of spatial structure with online platforms have left the visibility of migrations behind and diversified the reasons for migration.

There are international agreements and protocols in order to prevent mass migration movements. As an example of the immigration policies implemented in the 1990s, *the manual system of revalorisation du travail*, which prioritizes domestic employment instead of immigrant employment, can be given as an example for the variable economic indicators created by the migration mobility of France (Castles, 2008: 273). Apart from this, the political sanctions applied by most developed and developing countries against today's migration movements are the increase of protection for border states, the recognition of immigrants' residence permits within the framework of certain standards, and the immigration policies that are implemented. However, it is not possible to completely end migration mobility despite the policies that have been implemented and are being implemented as in the global society, individuals operate in flow. On the other hand, the commodification of labor force and the purchase of raw materials below its value by the core countries in the periphery countries trigger migration to the core countries. The British sociologist John Urry (2000) mentioned various types of forced migration that resulted in at least 140 million immigrants and refugees worldwide. According to the information obtained at the Global Refugee Forum held on December 18 and 19 (Refugee Day), there are nearly 260 million migrants, over 71 million IDPs, and more than 25 million refugees globally. (President of Republic of Turkey, 2019).

When the latest developments within the scope of migration mobility before Covid-19 are considered, it can be said that the source point of mass migrations began in Asia, Africa, and South America. It is seen that immigration from the neighboring countries to the USA from El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala in the South American continent has come to the fore as migration mobility before the epidemic. The former President Donald Trump waited at the Mexican borders against the immigration of Central American immigrants to the United States due to Mexico's economic crisis and to improve its welfare

systems, and political sanctions were imposed on Mexicans' return to their countries (Euronews, 2020).

On the other hand, the attractive factors of the developed social level of the USA are found in the migration mobility of individuals from many countries as birth tourism. Political sanctions against perpetrators' birth tourism and citizenship requests have developed especially against border countries. At this point, as one of the developments before Covid-19, it is seen that immigration policy is applied within the scope of prohibition and restriction of such immigration mobility, especially in underdeveloped countries, and the prevention of travel to the USA. The clearest examples of the politicization of migration on a global scale are the political sanctions that the USA imposes on border countries (Castles, 2008: 14).

It has been observed that the migration mobility from Asian countries, which has become a social problem especially for Western countries on a global scale before the epidemic, is at an impressive level in terms of the density of the mass population of all states. The existence of political conflicts and economic crises between Asian countries is the driving factor that causes immigration mobility. Particularly, political conflicts in the Middle East brought about migration waves that originated from the Levant region. It is seen that the migration mobility of the Middle East continues in its historical flow, but in the first months of 2020, it is possible to say that the immigration mobility caused global political crises. While the Syrian-centered immigration movement developed in the Levant region has been hosted by Turkey for about ten years, the increasing migration population and political changes have caused the spread of migration to European countries. The fact that immigration movements to the central European countries contain chain and mass elements is a demonstration that the mobility is unstoppable. It is inevitable to say that the attempts to prevent immigration to the European continent by sea and over land are carried out in an inhuman way according to the political level of the states.

Migration Mobility in the Covid - 19 Process

It is possible to say that the impact of the coronavirus epidemic, which shows an example of a global pandemic, on public health leaves the social appearance of migration waves in the background. In the process of mass migration crisis, it can be said that refugees are kept waiting at the borders used for transition

from the Middle East to European countries, as done before in the Covid-19 process. The suspended appearance of the social order caused the flow of migration mobility to be halted. In the Covid-19 process, it is possible to evaluate the migration mobility of societies in four basic frameworks in general:

- social domination of the authority of medicine
- societies not seeing the big picture
- public health priority in general context
- inequalities often take a back seat

The uncertainty of the risk community is an indicator of the unpreparedness for coronavirus and the ambiguity in migration policies. It can be said that the developments in the migration movements of the coronavirus, which affect the public health, are suspended on the agenda. Social developments are of primary importance under the authority of medicine. It has been concluded that the social developments experienced during the Covid-19 process closed the view of migration movements and that societies could not see the big picture. The fact that the epidemic affected all layers of the society, except for the class and status differences or inequality caused the stratification theories to remain in the background. However, it should be noted that since the access to health facilities could not be realized fairly in all layers of the society, it was concluded that class segregation deepened as a result of the pandemic.

When looking at the global developments of the coronavirus developing in China, it is seen that the USA has experienced the most deaths due to the virus. Italy and Spain, which are European countries with sea connections, constitute the countries with high loss of life. The states' declaration of a state of emergency in general has impeded the current migration mobility. The fact that the refugees are kept at the borders in this process brings the result of losing their lives due to the epidemic. The World Economic Forum stated that migration mobility stopped due to Covid-19. The global spread of social isolation associated with the coronavirus continues, with immigrants staying in refugee camps. In this context, according to April 2020 data, it is seen that global human mobility is restricted in 215 countries and more than 50 thousand mobility (IOM, 2020). On the other hand, it can be said that it reduces seasonal worker migration due to economic problems and the invisible position of the epidemic.

As a result of the developments in the Middle East, it is seen that the continuity of the Syrian immigration in the Covid-19 process is also provided. According to data from the General Directorate of Migration Management of Turkey, as of April 17, 2020 there was a population of 3,583,584 immigrants whose migration to Europe continued (DGMM, 2020). It can be said that the effect of Covid-19 on Turkey's opening to immigrant mobility from the Western border due to previous political tensions has changed with attempts to prevent migration mobility to Western countries. Therefore, even in the first two months of the pandemic (March-May 2020), it was reported that the number of Syrian immigrants coming from the Turkish border during Covid-19 exceeded 130,000 (DGMM, 2020).

It can be said that the concept of "social distance," which is a pandemic containment measure, is a controversial concept in terms of migrants because they wait in camps or at borders (Gholami, 2020). The situation of all immigrants, most of whom are at the borders within the risk network of the pandemic, being in need of adequate care and unable to meet their own medical needs, seems to be one of the global dangers.

It is observed that migration has been slowed down with the social and economic support of non-governmental organizations in refugee camps, based on the globally expanded "stay at home" calls of Syrian migrants who are kept at the borders. Calls for "stay at home" also constitute a view of ignoring and opposing the mobility of immigrants in terms of staying in your country or location. From the point of view of registered immigrants, it is worth noting that calls to stay at home make their lives economically difficult with low wages. In Turkey, it was observed that permanent residence permit applications were postponed to July and August. (DGMM, 2020). At the same time, information was given on epidemic measures against foreigners. On the other hand, it was learned that health support continues for Syrian refugees who have reached the borders of Western countries. Jordan appears as another country under the influence of Syrian immigration. As of April, more than 670 thousand immigrants were registered. According to the information obtained by Acu (2020), the necessity to stay at home due to the epidemic has shown that the immigration mobility originating from Jordan is disrupted, and the employment-based economic problems of migrants increase.

In the ongoing process of the coronavirus epidemic, many changes have occurred in terms of migration movements and policies. The first of these

changes was that the USA changed its immigration policies, even if only temporarily. It has been announced by the US Department of State that it will accept immigrants on the employment of healthcare workers regardless of nationality and belonging to combat the epidemic (The White House, 2021). On the other hand, in Australia, where more than half of the population consists of immigrants, economic growth has declined due to the pandemic and it has been reported that the country will accept immigrants by expanding the immigration policy it had previously restricted. (Bloomberg, 2020).

In order to restore the negatively changing economic order of Germany, which has implemented strict policies on immigration mobility until the epidemic process, African migrants will be offered temporary work permits for a cash fee (Deutsche Welle, 2020). In the Covid-19 process, the global impact of immigration has remained in the background. At the same time, it seems that the economic cash flow created by migration is interrupted, and it has been concluded that the migration mobility based on irregular migration is kept at the borders during the global quarantine process. The perception that the mobility of immigrants at the borders increases the spread of the virus in the society has shown that anti-immigrantism has increased.

Apart from the situations where immigration mobility is prevented and shelved at the transnational level, the limited domestic migration is also an undeniable situation. In China, the source country of the pandemic, internal migration seems to be limited regardless of the size of the area, due to the closure of provincial borders and the removal of entries and exits.

Change Predictions in Post-Pandemic Migration Mobility

The coronavirus epidemic has been a global indicator that shows that social structure is a risk society. The blind development process of modern society and the increasing intensity of global migration movements have left themselves in uncertainty with the Covid-19 process. Migration mobility is thought to be towards small-scale cities from the modern cities and metropolises with high welfare levels where migration develops. Although the process has shown that the class inequalities of societies do not have a valid importance in every case, it has also brought with it the fact that inequalities will increase multidimensionally. It is possible to say that another factor that triggers the situation of increasing inequalities will deepen the lower layer of inequality in the economic welfare

level of individuals with job types that are not suitable for working from home. In terms of welfare policies that have gained acceptance, it is a fact that especially developed countries will develop on the social state understanding. The fact that the capitalist governments, which are accepted as developed today, are at the top of the virus-related deaths has shown that health services are disrupted. The global raw material need will emerge as another important result due to the disruption of production during the post-pandemic epidemic. It is thought that the global need for raw materials and the migrant labor market will increase due to the exploitation of raw materials by developed countries.

On the other hand, the point that needs to be noted is that the migrant labor force's appearance as a provider of globalization will be interrupted. It is possible for the migrant labor force to remain in the background due to the employment problem of the states along with the economic declines. The concern that the immigrant population originating from Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East will cause a second epidemic after the Covid-19 wave remains dominant, but on the other hand, it is thought that the Covid-19 process will reduce the irregular migration to the lowest level.

It is said that anti-immigration, which is thought to increase the epidemic, will be high in China due to it being the epidemic source country. The global opposition to China due to the epidemic in terms of the development from the semi-peripheral country to the center country position has created predictions that the post-epidemic travels and immigration to China will be less than ever as negative appeals and derogatory and stigmatizing discourses threaten China's level of development. It is possible to say that immigration mobility will remain limited in the countries most affected by the epidemic regarding the post-epidemic appearance of immigration movements, especially in the USA, Italy, and Spain. After the epidemic, it is seen that the migration mobility, which is assumed to be seen as the cause of the global pandemic, will have a limited outlook for all nation-states. In this regard, Antonio Vitorino, Director of the United Nations International Organization for Migration, emphasized that the pandemic intensified anti-immigration and that new measures would be prepared against migration movements (IOM, 2021).

The pause of the migration flow again suggests that immigration mobility will not develop. "Temporary measures have a habit of surpassing emergencies," said Yuval Noah Hariri, author of *Sapiens*. In this regard, the delay of immigration

movements that were suspended due to the pandemic prevents the efforts to improve the living conditions of immigrants, which is an emergency. The occurrence of the pandemic in the period when intense immigration waves continued caused a change in the social agenda. Therefore, it causes the social perception to be reshaped, and migration, which is the main problem, to be erased from memory. It can be considered as an obvious result that post-pandemic migration mobility will appear in a way that will not cover the social developments that constitute the agenda. On the other hand, considering the possibility of creating a social risk in terms of migration policies, it can be concluded that migration waves will not develop in the same way as developed before the epidemic.

Conclusion and Discussion

Considering the social fears and insecurities created by the epidemic in the last phase of the epidemic process, it is seen that it will be difficult to reach the daily practices of the fluid modern society. The feature that makes social changes effective is that societies are not a continuation of the pre-change. In the days of corona, the society continued its temporal fluidity in special areas politicized in the process of global concern, fear, and alienation. The direction of the actors' attitudes towards the epidemic that threatens to change the social order emerged by downplaying and denying the effects and consequences of change, amplifying the payoffs of change, taking action to mitigate the effects of the pandemic, and ultimately acknowledging the uncertainties and risks posed by withdrawal and the pandemic. The impact of the pandemic on the social order made it possible for the actors to perceive that it would create more dangerous situations in the risk society. Beck talked at length about the self-advancing process of unavoidable risks with his theory of the risk society.

The epidemic process has shown how important the collective consciousness and social solidarity are, apart from the inevitability of risks to the individual and society. The phrase "Humanity is in crisis and there is no way out but human solidarity in this crisis" (Bauman, 2019:22) Bauman said on the ambiguity of modernity has been the basic acceptance of the epidemic process. It is an inevitable result that individuals see the people and institutions that cause the breakdown as the only criminals in periods of social breakdown. It is possible to say that the culprits of the epidemic process on a global scale are

the Chinese and immigrants in terms of transnational mobility due to the source point of the epidemic. As a matter of fact, the anti-immigrant argument was taken from the rising migration movements that formed the pre-pandemic agenda. Heavy balance sheets of social changes have also resulted in global minority immigrants and China, which is against the usual US capitalism. The pandemic situation of migration mobility and the severe consequences of immigrants have been ignored by the actors due to the fact that the epidemic is life-threatening. Finally, it should be noted that while the epidemic process increased the authoritarian position of medicine, science and information structures, information pollution about the epidemic caused the intensification of individualism and anti-immigrant sentiment.

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