

PERCEPTIONS

JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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Book Review
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Book Review
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Policy in a Changing World Order



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Mixed Migration Flows and the Changing Dynamics of Migration Research

Suna Gülfer IHLAMUR-ÖNER*

This issue features a selection of papers presented at the international workshop titled “Mixed Migration Flows and the Changing Dynamics of Migration Research” which was held in Istanbul on December 15, 2018 as the first activity of an international workshop series on mixed migration flows and trends. The aim of the workshop was to bring together researchers and practitioners from Turkey and abroad to discuss and “challenge current conceptualizations of forced and voluntary migration and to explore new conceptualizations and approaches with a view to grasp the complexity of mixed flows.”¹ As members of the organizing committee, we decided it was quite timely to focus on mixed migration flows and provide a venue for the expression and discussion of multi-disciplinary insights and approaches to this theme. We therefore invited researchers to submit theoretical and empirical papers with a view “to question policy categories that are assumed to be fixed and natural and discuss new ways of analyzing migratory processes.”²

The main focus of the workshop was on the state of the art of migration research as well as the conceptual, theoretical and methodological issues and key concepts and categorizations in this field. However, we also received very interesting papers on the policy dimension, which prompted us to include an additional session about this specific issue. Therefore, the workshop was composed of four very lively and participatory sessions on concepts and categories, new perspectives and methodologies in migration research, the politics of othering and policy responses to mixed migration flows.³

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the workshop participants who contributed to a very vigorous and interesting debate with their fruitful comments. I would like to extend my gratitude to each and every member of the organizing committee for their valuable contributions, from the selection

* Assoc. Prof., Marmara University, Department of Political Science and International Relations, İstanbul, Turkey. E-mail: gihlamur@marmara.edu.tr. ORCID: 0000-0002-0935-1101.

of the papers to be presented at the workshop to steering the debates during the workshop. Finally, I would like to thank the contributors to this issue, who devoted so much of their time and effort to help create this collection of articles.

Mixed Migration Flows

Since the early 1990s, two new conceptualizations have emerged on the changing nature of migration: the *migration-asylum nexus* and *mixed migration*, which attest to the fact that it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish factors conducive to voluntary migration from factors leading to forced displacement. As a consequence, it is becoming harder to differentiate refugees from labor migrants, and migratory flows are becoming increasingly mixed and highly complex.⁴

In the face of the growing extent and salience of mixed flows—complex population flows consisting of voluntary and forced migrants—it is becoming extremely difficult to identify the underlying causes of human mobility and decide whether people are fleeing poverty, environmental degradation, persecution, gender inequality, conflict and/or generalized violence, and whether people move with the motivation to find jobs, to join their families abroad, to fulfill individual aspirations or a combination of some or all of these motivations. Different categories of “people on the move” are composed of irregular or transit migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers, students, return migrants and unaccompanied minors traveling together irregularly with mixed motivations; they use the same vehicles or similar means and routes, have similar needs, resort to human smugglers and may become victims of human trafficking, wait in transit countries and find themselves exposed to multiple rights violations along the way.⁵ Being on the move in irregular flows or in transit entails mobility as well as immobility, pauses and periods of waiting in transit countries to make or revise decisions about the routes and destinations as a response to shifting policies, establish connections with human smugglers or save some money to continue travelling. Therefore, mobility as well as waiting are part of these flows.⁶ From the decision-making phase to all of the other stages of these flows, informal migrant networks play a very significant role in terms of providing information about the routes, destination countries and monetary or other means of support.⁷ Despite having different legal statuses, those who travel together are exposed to similar risks and “protections deficits.”⁸ In brief, mixed migration flows are of a heterogeneous and irregular nature in all of the phases of the migration journey, encompassing different sorts of cross-border movements (long-term, temporary, transit, circular,

chain and return migration), composed of people on the move with different legal statuses and rights and belonging to various categories.⁹

It has to be questioned why and how migration flows have become more complex and mixed. As Richmond argues, human mobility is a response to growing inequality with the transformation of the global economy. Therefore, economic factors affecting migration patterns and flows cannot be fully understood without taking the socio-political context into consideration,¹⁰ or how the world economy and politics are transformed within the context of neoliberal globalization. Voluntary or forced, migration is part and parcel of the restructuring of the global capitalist economy.¹¹ Dispossession, displacement and deepening inequality force people out of their homelands in the Global South and move them toward the Global North, which is dependent on a cheap and disposable migrant labor force. Growing irregular migration is an end result of the transition to flexible production and informalization. Refugee crises and flows similarly cannot be understood aloof from developments or trends in the global economy, power asymmetries in the international arena or clashes of interests among nation-states as well as non-state actors such as transnational corporations. Therefore, the refugee crises in the Middle East, Asia or Africa cannot be solely conceived as isolated events that erupt due to conflicts in the region. As Zolberg et al. argue, societies that are highly interconnected through transnational ties, and refugee crises and flows are not random events but are instead very profoundly connected and shaped by a series of political and economic transformations.¹² Therefore, factors conducive to the growth of irregular migration within the context of neoliberal globalization also affect forced displacement and refugee flows.¹³

In different parts of the world we see the emergence of mixed migration flows as a response to growing inequality, poverty, climate change, development-induced displacement and/or conflict-ridden displacement passing through, affecting and connecting several countries to each other and to the destination country. Mixed migration flows originate in the Euro-Mediterranean region, including the Middle East and North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, Central America and Asia.¹⁴ As Gosh argues, all of these different flows in several parts of the world have distinctive features. For instance, mixed migration flows from Zimbabwe to South Africa emerged as a consequence of economic crisis, torture, dispossession, limitations on access to basic food items as a result of land reform and the political violence conducted by the Mugabe regime against its political opponents. Hyper-inflation and rising unemployment were very much related and intermingled with political factors and gave rise to mixed flows.¹⁵ Mixed flows may originate in different places, but they are

somehow linked and have certain common characteristics that allow us to identify them as mixed migration flows: generalized violence, persecution, insecurity, exacerbation of geopolitical rivalries and growing poverty.¹⁶

While many on the move may reach the destination countries, these are very dangerous journeys, exposing people running away from violence to different sorts of risks and violence on the way. Within these flows people move or wait but also die, disappear, or fall victim to trafficking,¹⁷ sexual harassment and/or torture. As they arrive in the destination countries, migrants and refugees are exposed to different sorts of risks, including exploitation and discrimination. The process of dispossession that displaced people from their home country accelerates the process of their precarization in the receiving country. Migrants with no social or legal protection or bargaining power do not have any alternative but to agree to work in 3D-jobs (dirty, dangerous and demeaning) and lead precarious lives. The migrant precariat, subject to racial, ethnic and/or gender-based discrimination, is left without any means to organize against capitalism.

Given the complexity of the issue, developing effective policy responses becomes a very difficult task. Mixed migration flows pose very significant challenges to policymakers and state authorities, particularly in the receiving and transit countries, in terms of migration management and adjusting the tools at their disposal to address different categories of people while seeking to control their borders. As many governments opt to enforce restrictive measures at their borders or in their territory against mixed flows, this increases the human cost of mixed migration flows.

Overview of the Articles

Turkey as a destination and transit country is directly affected by mixed migration flows, which was a significant reason behind the definition of the workshop and the special issue theme. In the last three decades, Turkey has experienced a migration transition from being a predominantly migrant-sending country to being a transit and immigration country for irregular migrants originating from its neighboring regions. Furthermore, Turkey is currently hosting the largest refugee population in the world, mainly of Syrian origin, but also including Iraqis, Afghans and many others. Turkey is also one of the main recipients of asylum applications.

Turkey's EU bid has also turned it into a very important transit as well as destination country for mixed migration flows. Ever more restrictive barriers in the way of irregular migrants and refugees arriving through mixed flows

seeking entry to Europe have led to a growing emphasis on readmission agreements, efforts to deflect asylum-seekers to “safe third” countries or return them to safe countries of origin and even offer them an internal flight alternative.¹⁸ As Gamze Ovacık argues in her article on the safe third country concept, the term emerged to describe a way to control and limit the movement of asylum-seekers and to provide a “solution” to “asylum shopping.” As a country directly affected by mixed migration flows *en route* to Europe and having signed a readmission agreement with the EU in 2013 and a refugee deal in March 2016, Turkey faces the challenge of dealing with safe third country transfers. Ovacık discusses the emergence and evolution of the safe third country concept within the context of mixed migration flows and with reference to Turkey’s experience as a safe third country with respect to the EU countries.

The mixed flows that affect Turkey originate from or pass through the Mediterranean and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Voluntary migration and forced displacement are not new to the Mediterranean. However, in recent years the composition, motivations, characteristics, routes and modes of travel of these flows have become highly complex and mixed.¹⁹ Europe has been the target of these flows; however, since 2015 ongoing mixed migration flows have gained visibility, as between January 2015 and January 2016, 1.2 million people moved from “politically and militarily fractured” Syria, Iraq, Libya²⁰ as well as Pakistan, Afghanistan and different parts of Africa to Europe.²¹

Forced displacement is not also a new phenomenon in the MENA region. As Dawn Chatty argues, displacement and dispossession are part of the history and current affairs of the region.²² However, in migration theorizing as well as in forced migration studies the region has been under-represented until recently. Based on a systematic analysis of three migration studies journals over the last two years—the *Journal of Refugee Studies*, the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* and the *Journal of Comparative Migration Research*—and interviews with scholars conducting comparative migration research in the MENA region, Zeynep Şahin-Mecütek seeks to address an essential gap in the literature on comparative migration research in the MENA region by focusing on the refugee policies of certain countries, namely Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. Comparison of the refugee policies of certain countries in the region subject to same mixed migration flows during the same time period allows us to better understand the impact of these flows in origin-transit-receiving countries and account for changing patterns of migration and policy responses in order to better manage mass refugee flows. This research

endeavor therefore provides guidance and insights to researchers engaged in comparative research.

Another important contribution to scholarship on the MENA region is the article contributed by Mohammed Ouhemou and Mohamed El Amine Moumine, who discuss the evolution of migration policies within the broader context of the political and economic transformations shaping the MENA region, as well as country-specific political and economic concerns and interests. The article compares the migration policies and regulations adopted in the past as well as current policy responses to mixed flows adopted throughout the region. It is possible to see the changing patterns of migration and the composition of the migrant population over the years, as a result of which North African countries have gone through migration transition and become countries of transit and destination. As the authors note, despite the common challenges of the countries in the region, particularly the North African subregion, they have adopted different policy responses, over a range of more accommodative and pragmatic to exclusionary and securitizing approaches. The article also reveals how EU migration policymaking impacts regional migration policies as well as patterns, particularly in North Africa.

While mixed migration flows in the Mediterranean have been the focus of global attention, another major mixed migration flow that gained visibility from 2015 onward is the Central American caravan to the U.S. Migration from Central America to the U.S. through Mexico is not a new phenomenon. However, in recent years migration has grown considerably. Flows from Central America (mainly from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador) passing through Mexico and reaching the U.S. have grown to be highly complex over the years. Between 1980 and 2005, migration from Central America to the U.S. increased ten times and reached 3,385,000.²³ Since 2015, the mixed nature of these flows has become more visible, with caravans composed of irregular, transit and return migrants; asylum-seekers; women and families running away from violence or poverty and unaccompanied minors seeking to join their family members in the U.S.²⁴ In 2015, the number of mixed migrants heading toward the U.S. reached up to 417,000 people.²⁵ Growing rural poverty linked to climate change is one of the main factors behind the rising levels of emigration.²⁶

Mixed flows also reveal the limited state capacity of the origin or transit countries in coping with the effects of climate change, growing poverty, crime and violence. Those fleeing poverty or violence back home are exposed to

many risks throughout the journey as they pass through transit countries; these risks lead them to change routes in order to avoid being kidnapped, assaulted or killed at the hands of gangs. Unaccompanied children, particularly girls, constitute the most vulnerable members of the caravans.²⁷ As the caravans reach the U.S. border, it is hard to say that they reach the safety and security they are seeking or find refuge from the violence and hardships they are fleeing. This takes us to the policy responses of the U.S. authorities to the mixed flows.

President Trump, starting with his election campaign, approached the migration issue with a securitizing logic; during his presidency he has sought to establish stricter standards for legal and irregular migration. During his election campaign he promised to build a wall at the U.S.-Mexican border to stem mixed migration flows. Facing resistance, he threatened to call a national emergency to fund the building of the wall.²⁸ In this special issue, Hugh Hutchison compares the Trump administration's stance on migration with that of the Obama administration, seeking to trace the continuity and change in U.S. policy-making on migration. Hutchison was not one of the workshop participants, but we believe it is important to provide the reader with the opportunity to evaluate factors conducive to the emergence and evolution of mixed flows in different parts of the world. Hutchison's article discusses the nature and composition of the flows and evaluates the U.S. policy responses to these flows under both Democratic and Republican presidents. As Hutchinson concludes, despite Trump's harsh rhetoric on migration, we see a significant continuity in his approach rather than a rupture. It would not be wrong to argue that the decisions and actions of the previous administration paved the way for the current measures taken by the Trump administration. Hutchinson particularly elaborates on the treatment of migrants as they reach the U.S., and discusses detentions, returns and deportations under the Obama and Trump administrations.

One of the main concerns regarding mixed migration flows is providing protection for vulnerable groups such as refugees, asylum-seekers and unaccompanied children. Many of the refugees travelling in these flows do not have access to protection and they are exposed to different sorts of risks throughout the journey. The securitization of mixed flows lead to the erosion of the rights of refugees; they receive a "less friendly welcome" or face pressures to return to their countries of origin in the countries where they are seeking refuge.²⁹ It is possible to talk about the rise of an anti-refugee sentiment worldwide, particularly in the Global North, but also in refugee hosting states in the Global South, especially due to the protraction of the refugee crisis. In

such a context, how refugees are represented becomes highly important. In her review article, Müzeyyen Pandir seeks to address how the mainstream media's portrayals of refugees affect their life chances and experiences by shaping perceptions of refugee identities; Pandir reveals how the media fails to fulfil its duty to inform the public, accurately portray migration-related issues and avoid stereotyping migrants and refugees. The media's framing of migration as a problem has implications for social cohesion and social conflict. The dehumanization of refugees by the media functions to shape public and elite views and attitudes and feeds into public fear and anxiety about migration, thus potentially leading to further resentment against refugees and creating more hardships for them to endure.³⁰ As misrepresentation of refugees leads to social exclusion, marginalization and otherization of refugees, the article elaborates upon two alternative representation strategies, namely empathizing with refugees and rights-based journalism to deconstruct dominant misrepresentations and open up room for the accurate portrayal of refugees.

To better understand the experiences of migrants, refugees and unaccompanied children there is a need to look beyond the statistical figures, state policies or structural factors. This is one of the shortcomings of the IR literature on migration. The voices of migrants and refugees and thus the accounts of their experiences are not heard or are silenced on the macro level of analysis. Dialogue across disciplines may introduce such voices. Leyla Savsar, in her article on children's literature and its representation of refugee children, questions to what extent children's literature reiterates conventional portrayals or even misrepresentations of refugee children and to what extent it challenges them. Drawing on postcolonial studies and narratives of settlement, Savsar seeks to answer whether children's literature and their narratives could be used to criticize and challenge dominant ideas, ideologies and narratives about refugeehood, homelessness and identity, as well as the unequal global order and power asymmetries in international relations that shape migration patterns and migrant experiences.

The six articles in this issue provide a very interesting sample of research and debate on mixed migration flows, aiming to contribute to our understanding of the changing nature of migration and migration research. We hope that the articles will stimulate debate on mixed migration research and inspire new workshops and research initiatives. This issue definitely reinforces our determination to organize the second workshop of the series. In the post-Covid-19 world, we hope to continue to critically engage the questions raised by these articles.

Endnotes

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ARTICLE

Conducting Comparative Migration Research in MENA: Are the Regional Countries too Unique or too Similar for Comparisons of Refugee Policies?

Zeynep ŞAHİN MENCÜTEK*

Abstract

The paper argues that the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are neither too unique nor too similar for conducting comparative migration research. However, the systematic review of three leading journals in the field of migration studies illustrates that comparative studies addressing migration in the region remain scarce. Relying on a review of the literature and interviews with scholars conducting comparative migration research in the MENA region, this paper contends that an examination of the countries located in MENA, which are subject to the same forced mass migration situation during the same time period, is advantageous for comparative analysis. Despite these advantages, however, making comparisons within regions is a very challenging scholarly endeavor due to intra-regional variations, the rapidly changing security, political and policy environment in the regional countries, and the lack of adequate research institutions and funding supporting large-scale research. In addition to identifying advantages and challenges, this paper discusses how scholars make decisions about what to compare and how to compare in studying migration in, from and through MENA. The article also provides concrete empirical examples that address policy patterns,

* Dr. and Senior Research Associate, CERC in Migration and Integration, Ryerson University, Canada. E-mail: zeynepsahinmencutek@gmail.com. ORCID: 0000-0002-6676-8579. This article was written during the author's research fellowship at Käte Hamburger Kolleg / Centre of Global Cooperation Research, University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany between March 2019 and February 2020. The author would also like to thank Suna Gülfer İhlamur-Öner and the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments as well as Bezen Balamir Coşkun, Estella Carpi, Gerasimos Tsourapas and Kelsey Norman for their inputs regarding research in the MENA region.

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changes over time and drivers of refugee governance by comparing the cases of Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.

Keywords

Middle East and North Africa, comparative migration, refugee policies, case selection, methodology.

Introduction

Two regions seem particularly salient for studying refugee situations, namely the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). However, the countries of MENA have been under-represented in the theorization of migration in general, and in refugee and forced migration studies in particular in recent years. Yet comparative cases from these regions have a high potential to fill gaps in our understanding of the changing patterns in origin, transit and receiving countries as well as in informing theory pertaining to the governance of mass refugee flows. They can enhance existing theories by shedding light on the interactions between regions, particularly between the Global North and South.¹ Such a regional focus is crucial to challenging the dominant Euro-centric character of comparative refugee and immigration studies and to effectively question the Middle Eastern exceptionalism discourse.

This paper contends that an examination of countries located in the same region, whereby these countries are subject to the same forced mass migration situation during the same time period, is advantageous for comparative analysis. This allows the researcher to hold some variables constant, such as refugee group, origin region and timescale in order to focus on other variables. On the other hand, it is a very challenging scholarly endeavor for several reasons. The list may range from within-region variations to the rapidly changing security, political and policy environment in the regional countries, as well as the lack of adequate research institutions in the region and lack of funding supporting large-scale research.

The paper argues that MENA² is neither too unique nor its countries too highly similar to each other for conducting comparative migration research. However, there is a need for systematic comparison strategies and learning from other regional experiences. Relying on a review of the relevant literature and interviews with scholars conducting comparative migration research in the MENA region, this paper demonstrates how scholars make a decision

about what to compare and how to compare, which is part and parcel of theory-building and theory evaluation. The paper starts with a general overview of comparative research in migration studies, and then move to map the place of MENA in this literature by conducting a systematic analysis of leading migration journals— *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* and *Journal of Comparative Migration Research*. A concrete example from comparative research addressing refugee governance in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan is provided to address ways of making comparisons to understand policy patterns, changes over time and policy drivers.

The following section addresses challenges and limitations in conducting comparative refugee studies in the region, relying on interviews with six scholars who have published more than one comparative research article about MENA. Although interview requests were made to 12 scholars, only six of them responded positively, while others had either time limitations or did not consider themselves expert enough to give an interview on comparative research designs. Scholars were asked to answer eight questions about their research experience via email in the summer of 2018. Three participants are based in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, while the other three work for British or American Universities. They all conducted long-term field work in MENA and wrote their dissertations about it. Their studies cover Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Morocco and Israel, as well as the European migration regime. While one scholar has a disciplinary background in Anthropology, one is in the Social Work and Sociology department and the other four are from the field of Political Science. The paper concludes by providing the scholars' general strategies and recommendations for coping with the challenges of comparative research. Before moving to the analysis, it is useful to give an overview of comparative research designs in migration studies.

Main Types of Comparative Migration Research Designs

There is a wide range of variety in the comparative research designs that are adopted by migration scholars based upon their research question.³ The most common type includes a spatial base, namely cross-location (among territorial settings); this type includes cross-country, cross-region and cross-province/city/town.

TYPES	UNITS OF COMPARISON	EXAMPLES
Cross-location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Among territorial settings - Cross-country - Cross-region - Cross-province/city/town within a specific country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Turkey, Morocco, Egypt - Latin America and South Asia - Istanbul and Gaziantep
Cross groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Among migrant groups (multiple groups from different countries of origin settling in a single national/ host context) - Among those having a different status - Among different migration waves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Turkish migrants and Algerian migrants in France - Refugees versus labor migrants - recently arrived Syrians versus previous Syrian migrants (such as in Lebanon)
Cross-meso levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Among organizations and institutions - Among migrant organizations/advocacy groups - Among political parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IOM-UNHCR- Egyptian diaspora organizations in the UK - Rightist vs leftist parties
Cross-time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Among different periods of time - Before and after an event (such as an economic or political crisis) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Iraqi refugees in Jordan in 2003 and after 2014
Combined comparisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both cross-country and cross-time - Both cross-country and cross groups - Both cross-country and cross-city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre- and post-2011 African refugee flows to Egypt and Morocco - Palestinians and Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan - Border cities in Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria

Table 1: Variations in Comparative Research Designs in Migration Studies

Source: E. Yalaz & R. Zapata-Barrero, “Mapping the Qualitative Migration Research in Europe: An Exploratory Analysis,” in E. Yalaz & R. Zapata-Barrero (eds.), *Qualitative Research in European Migration Studies*, Cham: Springer, 2018, p. 17.

A case of cross-location comparison, might be a comparison of labor market integration policy outcomes in Canada and Sweden.⁴ A similar topic can

be examined by conducting a cross-group comparison (among migrant groups) such as the labor market integration of three recently arrived refugee groups, such as ex-Yugoslavs, black Africans and people from the Middle East in Australia. Cross-city comparison has increased in recent years due to the local turn in migration studies. The third possible type is the cross-meso level (among organizations and

institutions), which focuses on comparisons such as examining the framings or policy impacts of different migrant advocacy groups in a certain migrant host country.⁵ The fourth type is comparison cross-time (among different periods), such as comparing Turkey's response to mass flows of Bulgarian Turks in 1989 and of Syrians since 2011.⁶ The last type has combined comparative designs, such as combining cross-country and cross-city. Such combinations are promising, as they may show "to what extent local decision-making processes are conditioned by the specific national legal system and which kinds of similarities and dissimilarities can be detected *ceteris paribus*."⁷

The type of comparison scholars select is directly related to their research question. Each topic can be studied by each type of comparison method, but the research question informs the type. For example, a cross-group research design will focus on factors related to groups, their hosting contexts and interactions among them in ways that explain differences in outcomes. Cross-time comparisons are specifically critical to see continuities and ruptures in policy-making processes.

All of these types of comparisons help in building on the empirical dimension of migration literature, accordingly enabling better-grounded analyses. As these are qualitative comparisons, they seek to present "rich, multi-layered and nuanced accounts of the ways in which various aspects of the everyday immigrant experience evolve and unfold."⁸ Moreover, they enable us to understand "perspective from within and to gain the depth and quality of information needed to provide a realistic picture of certain migration processes, causes and dynamics,"⁹ even for exploring challenging issues such as human smuggling or refugee militarization that are prevalent in the public discourse.

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These studies are also important because migration issues are “in need of more demanding objective evidence for scientific development, as well as in need of offering viable policy routes to guide social and policy change.”¹⁰ As Scholten notes, “migration researchers are a prominent voice in the public debate around issues like the refugee crisis or radicalization, and a broad range of institutes has evolved operating at the boundaries of science and politics to contribute to ‘evidence based policymaking.’”¹¹ Many methodological review studies on migration tell us that there is a lack of comparative research that might better inform evidence-based policymaking and the development of science.

Mapping Comparative Research in Leading Migration Journals

The comprehensive analysis undertaken by Yalaz and Zapata-Barrero, who draw from 627 articles published in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* and *Journal of Ethnic and Racial Studies* that used qualitative migration research in Europe between 2000 and 2016 shows that only 15 percent of the articles used comparative research design. While they adopted various comparison types, cross-location made up more than the half of the comparisons, overwhelming cross-location, cross-time, cross-meso level and cross-group comparisons. Yalaz and Zapata-Barrero found that the share of comparative research in

Although author-by-country analysis provides insights about the places of knowledge production, it gives less information about the geographical coverage in journals of the field. These types of empirical analysis have not yet been conducted for MENA-related studies.

migration studies rose in the 2015–2016 period, reaching 25 percent.¹² In a recent study, McNally and Rahim examined the *Journal of Refugee Studies* by looking at the where the authors who published in these journals were based in to answer the question, to what extent the Refugee Studies field is global or not. They found that UK-

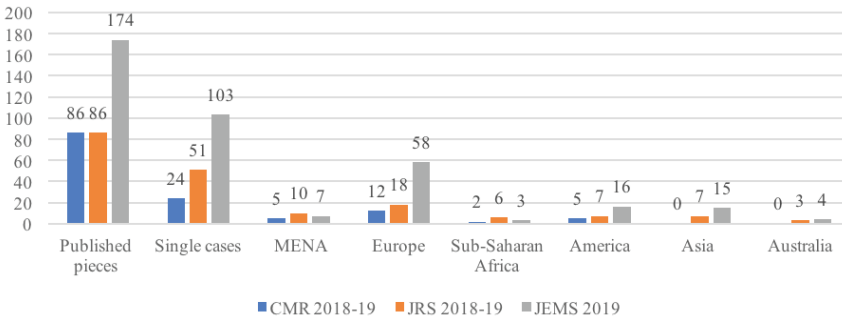
based authors dominate the journal, publishing more articles than authors from any other country. Moreover, all of the top 10 countries where authors are based are in the Global North, although the majority of refugees live in the Global South.¹³ Although author-by-country analysis provides insights about the places of knowledge production, it gives less information about the geographical coverage in journals of the field. These types of empirical analysis have not yet been conducted for MENA-related studies. This study

aims to fill this gap by exploring the state of migration research about MENA from a methodological perspective.

To further provide empirical evidence for an overview of comparative research, I analyzed three top journals in the field of Migration and Refugee Studies, focusing on the geographical coverage of articles and the author’s methodological choices: conducting a single case study or a comparative study. To capture variations, I chose one top journal from the refugee studies field, *Journal of Refugee Studies* (JRS) and one top journal from the migration studies field, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (JEMS). Due to the specific methodological emphasis of this analysis, I also looked at the journal of *Comparative Migration Studies* (CMS). To conduct a balanced analysis, I examined the last two years of JRS and JEMS that both published four regular issues and special issues, a total 86 research articles in the two-year period between 2018 and 2019. Differently, JEMS published more: a total of 17 issues and 174 pieces in 2019 alone. Thus, I limited my analysis for JEMS to one year. In total, I drew the analyses from 346 research articles from three different leading journals. In each journal and year, I discerned the number of articles published in these journals that focus on single European countries. I checked the number of articles conducting within-Europe comparisons, those including other regions to comparisons or giving space to other regional comparisons. The regions are divided as East and South Asia, MENA, Sub-Saharan Africa, North and South America and Australia. I also note which MENA countries are covered in these three journals, and differentiate between city-level and meso-level comparisons.

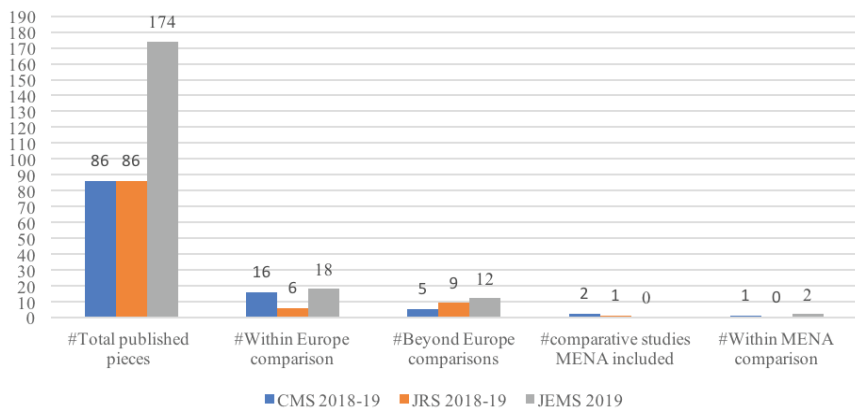
The analysis first categorizes the articles based on geographic focus: Among a total of 346 articles in three journals, 178 were designed as single case studies and focused on migrants and refugees in specific countries, while 176 focused on more global topics, theoretical debates or comparative studies.

Articles by Region



As the chart on the regional distribution of single case studies shows, the majority of single cases addressed European countries, particularly in Western Europe. For example, in the JEMS, the UK was the most studied country (n=15), followed by Germany (n=8), the Netherlands (n=6), Italy (n=5), Australia and Denmark (n=4) each, France (n=3), Belgium and Switzerland (n=2) each, and one article each for Norway, Ireland, Greece, Croatia, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and Spain. The same journal provided relatively good coverage of countries from Asia and America. However, African countries received very limited attention, only appearing in three articles.

Comparative Studies



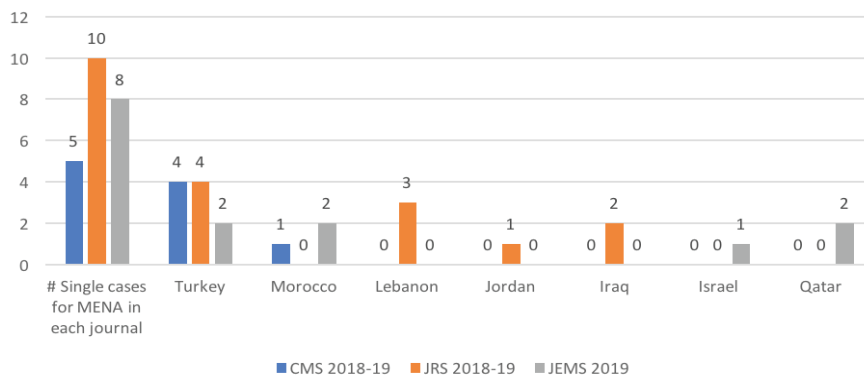
The comparative cases in each journal have some peculiarities. In general, the number of comparisons, even in the CMS, is lower than that of single case studies and theoretical articles. Among 346, only 74 articles are based on comparative design, making 21.9 percent. Interestingly, in each journal, the percentage of comparative studies are similar, around 18%, which does not confirm the expectation that the CMS might have published more comparisons. The number of within-Europe comparisons are higher than any other regions in both the CMS and JEMS. Only in the JRS are non-European comparisons (n=9) more numerous than within-Europe comparisons (n=6). One of these articles compares Greece and Turkey. The JEMS has a total of 18 within-Europe comparisons that have broad variations, including studies adopting survey analysis across countries, with two or three country comparisons. The JEMS also published articles comparing countries from different continents, particularly the U.S., with Japan, Malaysia, Canada and the Netherlands.

These journals reflect awareness regarding the imbalances in knowledge production. To this end, in 2012 the JRS published a piece criticizing the North-South dichotomies and imbalances in research networks.¹⁴ The analysis of articles in the JRS's 2018 and 2019 volumes displays that the percentage of single cases studies from MENA, Africa, Asia and Latin America are higher than that of the JEMS and CMS. Reflecting the limited number of insights from the non-Western World, the JEMS published two special issues that mainly include articles addressing issues around gender, development and migration brokerage in the Global South. The journal of CMS, as a new IMISCOE journal, was established with the specific aim of prioritizing comparative research.

Comparative Migration Studies in the MENA

The analysis of three journals, the CMS, JRS and JEMS shows that MENA has received scant attention. It should be noted that MENA countries do not constitute a homogenous region; however, they still allow for comparative studies. In terms of single cases from MENA, the distribution shows interesting trends discussed below.

Single Cases by Country



Out of 178 single case studies in three journals, only 23 are from MENA countries. Among the three journals, the JRS gives more coverage of the MENA countries, particularly the three main refugee hosting countries: Turkey (n = 4), Lebanon (n = 3) and Iraq (n = 2). The CMS has also paid more attention to Turkey (n = 5) and Morocco (n = 1), in fact as an extension of the EU's migration dynamics, more particularly with reference to the topics of externalization.¹⁵

It should be noted that MENA countries do not constitute a homogenous region; however, they still allow for comparative studies.

Due to its broader focus, covering labor migration and ethnic relations, the JEMS included the cases of Qatar and Israel. Both the CMS and JEMS have few within-MENA comparisons.

The JEMS included countries from MENA in European comparisons, for example in a study on Syrian refugees' education in Lebanon and Turkey along with Sweden, Germany and Greece.¹⁶ The same journal also published an article comparing Turkey, Morocco and Moldova with a reference to the EU's visa liberation. The within-MENA comparison compared Egypt, Morocco and Turkey¹⁷ to discuss policies toward migrants and refugees in the transit-turned-host countries. The sole within-MENA comparison in the CMS covered Morocco and Tunisia¹⁸ to explore how political systems shape immigration policymaking. Making cross-time and cross-group comparisons are notable, for instance in an article recently published in the JRS that compares Turkey's reactions to the Syrian inflow with its responses to previous refugee groups, including Iraqis in 1988, Bosnians in 1992, Kosovars in 1998 and Chechens starting in 1999.¹⁹ City-level comparisons for MENA have not yet been published, although the CMR has started to publish European city comparisons, for example between Paris and Berlin, and address city-level migration dynamics from MENA, e.g. about Cairo, Beirut, Istanbul and others.

Beside these journals, a general overview of single-case and comparative studies shows that the Middle East has been under-represented, and there has been scant attention to comparative refugee and forced migration studies.²⁰ The Levant, the Maghreb countries, the Gulf,²¹ North Africa, the Arab states and the Mediterranean (particularly when the emphasis is on the EU) are referred to as encompassing/regional units. The Palestinian refugee issue is the most widely used refugee case due to its importance and protraction. Israel is often treated as a single case study, and studies are limited on Oman, Yemen and Iran in English language academic literature.

In terms of their scope, the articles limit their comparison to individual policy areas such as encampment,²² temporary protection²³ and humanitarianism.²⁴ Turkey-Morocco cross-country comparison is preferred in dissertations and books when the subject is the EU's externalization of its migration policy, the policies of transit countries or the governance of irregular migration.²⁵

Articles comparing two countries, often Lebanon and Jordan, have been published much more than comparisons of three countries with a number of exceptions.²⁶

In spite of some contextual specificities of the region, as indeed all regions have, current comparative cases from the Middle East have a high potential to fill gaps in our understanding of the changing patterns in receiving countries, as well as in informing theory pertaining to the governance of mass refugee flows. Moreover, historically and currently, the region, particularly countries like Turkey, Lebanon, Algeria and Morocco encounter mixed migration flows that might provide insights about both the management of these flows at the country level and their relation to Mediterranean migration dynamics.²⁷ Comparative cases will also enhance existing theories by shedding light on the interactions between regions, namely between the Middle East and Europe, as well as between the Global North and South. Such a regional focus is crucial to challenge the dominant Euro-centric character of comparative refugee and immigration studies and to effectively question the Middle Eastern exceptionalism discourse.

The following section illustrates how comparative design addressing migration dynamics in the MENA region is adopted in practice and what differences it makes for the study of international migration as well as to what extent this approach holds promise for exploring policies in the region and the politics behind them. To respond to these questions, I provide a concrete empirical example below.

Comparison of Refugee Governance in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan

Reflecting the migration dynamics of the last decade, research on single case and comparative studies addressing policies for Syrian refugees has been on the rise.²⁸ From 2011 to 2019, according to the UNHCR, ten refugee emergencies and situations have occurred/are occurring across the globe. The UNHCR webpage lists them, quite interestingly without differentiating

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between the country of origin and receiving country. While occurrences involving the Central African Republic, Burundi and Europe (migrants and refugees illegally arriving there from the Mediterranean Sea to Greece and Italy) are described as ‘refugee situations,’ others, including situations involving the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Nigeria, South Sudan, Yemen, Syria and Rohingya (Muslims fled from Myanmar to Bangladesh) are called ‘refugee emergencies.’²⁹ In these cases, it is mainly in the neighboring countries that displaced people seek refuge. Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iran, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Chad and Uganda have been in every list of top refugee-hosting countries from 2013 to 2018, as they are hosting more than half of the world’s refugees.³⁰

As these figures make evident, two regions seem particularly salient for refugee situations, namely the Middle East and Africa. An examination of countries located in the same region, whereby these countries are subject to the same forced mass migration situation during the same time period, is advantageous for comparative analysis. This allows for some variables (refugee group, region, timescale) to be held constant while some other changing variables come into focus.

The Middle East,¹³ if we count Turkey as being part of it, hosted more refugees than any other region from 2015 to 2018, which is more than 30 percent of the world’s total refugees.³¹ The 2018 statistics of the UNHCR demonstrate that 55 percent of world refugees come from three countries: Syria (5.5 million), Afghanistan (2.5 million) and Iraq (1.3 million) (UNHCR 2018). According to the UNHCR, among these countries at least 15 conflicts broke out or restarted between 2011 and 2015,¹⁴ and the war in Syria became the largest driver of forced internal and international displacement.³² Although the Iraqi and Yemeni refugee situations are two other cases that took place in the Middle East, the scale of Syrian refugee migration has made it more pertinent. In sum, these figures indicate that the Middle East, and the case of displacement from the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) in particular, are central for efforts aimed at gaining a better understanding of refugee governance.

The majority of Syrians fleeing the civil war in their country are located in Syria’s three neighboring countries: Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. More than 5 million internationally displaced Syrians have found temporary refuge in these countries, while 4.9 million of them are registered with UNHCR or

respective state authorities. These countries together host around 93 percent of all internationally displaced Syrians. The Syrian refugee movement makes evident that at present (as of mid-2020), Turkey has hosted the largest number of refugees worldwide, namely, 3.5 million Syrians over a period of five consecutive years (2013–2020).³³ Furthermore, the same movement made it clear that Lebanon has hosted the largest number of refugees relative to its national population. With these figures and the protraction of the refugee situation for more than eight years, it becomes clear that these three frontline countries are central for a better understanding of the main patterns of mass refugee governance in the Middle East.

The cases of Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan are each quite unique and yet, still highly similar to each other. The cases enable us to adopt a similar research design. They are all upper middle-income countries with upward development trajectories.³⁴ Considering their positions in the international system, Turkey is a middle-sized state, while Jordan and Lebanon are considered small states with respect to their size, population and military and economic power. The public service provision capacities of Jordan and Lebanon are more limited than those of Turkey. Jordan and Lebanon rely on humanitarian aid from the international community to cover the expenses of refugees—like many other countries in the Global South that have encountered refugee movements in recent years. Still, all three are able to develop and implement independent policies and, to some extent, make respective shifts in their policies over time. There is no doubt that their migration regimes show some differences, as Turkey has a more institutionalized national asylum regime that complies with EU standards as well as a stronger state capacity.

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These three cases are suitable for examining the influence of a particular set of factors, namely international politics, security/domestic politics and economy/development in mass migration governance. These countries neighbor Syria, with which they have a history of close but strained bilateral

relations. Although all three had a short-lived rapprochement centered on economic relations with Syria in the 2000s, the outbreak of the armed conflict in that country in 2011 weakened the relations once again. Due to their geographical proximity, the war had a significant impact on all three countries—spilling over due to shared borders, intense ethnic, religious, sectarian, kinship, tribal and business ties among their population and, more generally, also due to disruptions in regional trade and the balance of power.

All three countries have been involved in the Syrian war since 2011 but to different degrees. The Syrian war began as a civil war but turned into a many-sided proxy war over the course of a few years. Accordingly, the stances of the neighboring countries not only took sharp turns but also came to have an increasing impact on the war. The manner in which the war unfolded did not allow them to fully detach themselves, and both Jordan and Lebanon got involved in the conflict but not to the same extent as Turkey. All three countries have faced severe challenges through the loss of border security, the infiltration of jihadist fighters and bombings in border towns. Such challenges have salient and complex domestic components. Not only national security but also regime security, defined as the maintenance of internal stability and the survival of the ruler and supporting coalitions, appear to be the main concerns for the Lebanese and Jordanian governments. Furthermore, improving the power of Iran, balancing-blocking acts towards Iran, the growing power of non-state actors, the involvement of non-regional powers as well as heavy militarization in the region have made all three countries anxious about the regional power changes and their own geostrategic positions. Overall, refugees fleeing from Syria have been approached as a highly politically sensitive issue during the Syrian crisis. Due to the high numbers of refugees, Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan have been required to respond to the mass migration challenge by devising policies in relevant domains. Moreover, since 2018, all three countries have sought to speed up the return of Syrian refugees to their home country, although continuing violence, political instability, persistent insecurity, destroyed infrastructure and the disruption of livelihoods hinder safe returns. While Lebanon decisively assists refugees in returning to the Syrian government-controlled regions by collaborating with the Syrian

government and intelligence agency, Turkey increasingly encourages voluntary returns to the opposition-controlled areas by collaborating with local pro-Turkey actors.³⁵

A comparative study of three countries in the Middle East, which all host the same refugee population, is an important step forward in the understanding of policy fields, actors and patterns of refugee governance in the region. Findings from these three countries could help to formulate an original theoretical model demonstrating variations in patterns of governance as they pertain to mass refugee flows on the basis of policy type, changes in the duration of a given refugee issue and interactions with the international refugee regime. An example of a descriptive combined cross-country and cross-time comparison, basis on variation on changes in national refugee response from 2011 to 2018 can be seen below.

Country	Initial response pattern	Critical juncture transition	Protracted response pattern
	1–3 years	3–5 years	After 5 years
Turkey	Ad hoc	Regulations and restrictions	Highly regulative Moderately restrictive
Lebanon	Policy vacuum/ inaction	Ad hoc policies	Moderately regulative Moderately restrictive
Jordan	Mainly ad hoc Partially regulative	Regulative and restrictive	Highly regulative Highly restrictive

Table 2: Multi-stage and Multi-pattern Governance in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan

Source: Z. Şahin Mencütek, *Refugee Governance, State and Politics in the Middle East*, London: Routledge, 2018, p. 245.

An example of cross-country comparison (analytical), basis on variations on independent variables, namely factors which have impact on the policies and politics of mass migration governance is demonstrated in the following table.

General explanation category	Specific factors	Sub-factors	Continuum of factors in each case		
			Turkey	Lebanon	Jordan
Economy-development	Absorption capacity	Pre-2011 cross-border mobility	Low	High	Moderate
		Economic power	High	Low	Low
	Development trajectory under threat	Refugee arrivals' pressure on infrastructure and public services	Low	High	High
		Negative impact of Syrian crisis on national economy	Low	High	High
National security / domestic politics	Likelihood of cross-border violence and of instability due to the refugee arrivals		Moderate to high	Moderate to high	Moderate
	Negative policy of legacy and memories about protracted refugee crisis		Not relevant	High (about Palestinians)	High (about Palestinians and Iraqis)
	Concerns about destabilization related to identity and political demography		Low to moderate	High	High
	Securitization and politicization of Syrian refugees		Low to moderate	Moderate to high	High
International politics	Foreign policy objectives in Syrian conflict		High (assertive)	Low (defensive)	Low (defensive)
	Expectations from international bargaining		Low to high	Low to moderate	High

Table 3: Factors Influencing the Governance of Syrian Mass Migration in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan

Source: Z. Şahin Mencütek, *Refugee Governance, State and Politics in the Middle East*, London: Routledge, 2018, p. 258.

Challenges and Limitations

As seen in the mapping of leading journals and books, comparison in the MENA is realizable. However, scholars of comparative migration studies face several challenges and limitations. When it comes to MENA, these challenges mount due to the characteristics of the region. Interviews with migration scholars working on MENA provide important insights as discussed below.

The first challenge that migration scholars in MENA face is the lack of basic administrative data. The data that do exist (such as the numbers of refugees, migrants and irregular migrants) are often collected with “a specified institutional context for specific purposes, using definitions that reflect their particular tasks, assumptions and preoccupations.”³⁶ Thus, even if you access a certain kind of data about migration (for example about deportations, returns or work permits), there are huge concerns about whether they measure the same phenomenon due to the use of different categories as well as questions as to whether they are complete or representative over the course of years (if we set aside the question of reliability and validity).³⁷ Some researchers also express that “common obstacles often include accessing official data, reports etc.”³⁸ Problems in accessing people for an interview, last minute cancellations, language barriers and the near impossibility of accessing state officers for interviews are noted as additional challenges, particularly with respect to difficulties in doing field work.

The second challenge involves the concepts and terminology that are used differently in national and local contexts. Examples include who is defined as a refugee or an asylum-seeker. There are a plethora of usages from displaced person(s) to guests, those under temporary protection, Syrians etc., making the access of comparable data impossible. Regarding themes, terminological conflation and their operationalization/measurement are quite problematic, as may be observed in studying integration policies (social harmony in the case of Turkey) and assimilation policies (gaps in political/public discourse and actual practices). These all make the jobs of scholars difficult in communicating with a broader audience and in preparing publications based on comparisons.³⁹

Another important challenge involves the research environment due to “the rapidly changing security, political, and policy environment”⁴⁰ as well as “political uncertainty.” Additionally, “questions of ethics and positionality of the researcher”⁴¹ come on the agenda. “Economic cost of fieldwork and working with translators is among the challenges faced by researchers conducting comparative migration research.”⁴² Researchers also report having experienced the loss of data that frequently occurs in conflict or crisis zones⁴³ or confiscations of data due to the looseness of what is defined as a national security or politically sensitive issues.

In Lieu of Conclusion: A Few Research Strategies and Recommendations for Comparative Studies

Comparisons across time, territorial units and the combination of both is possible in relation to the research question and unit of analysis on which researchers seek to focus, as previously discussed in other fields such as Political Science.⁴⁴ For example, from the very beginning, researchers may limit their analysis to the state level as the primary unit of analysis (relevant to disciplinary preferences) when the aim is to understand the characteristics and drivers of refugee governance. Experiences show that researchers “picked up locations where meaningful events had occurred, or one where violence happened and one where it never happened.”⁴⁵ Some “looked for countries in the region that would help understand variation.”⁴⁶ For example, one researcher started to work on Egypt, then extended the study into Morocco and Turkey, because in these three countries migration and refugee policies gained saliency beginning in the 1980s, when “neighboring Europe began to experience new migration pressures as a result of the creation of the Schengen system [that continue] up until the present.”⁴⁷ If the focus is on governance, the strong possibility of multi-level, multi-stage, multi-thematic, multi-sector and multi-pattern governance should be taken into account.

It is useful to specify the policy field as much as possible (labor market participation, naturalization laws, policy planning, encampment, etc.).⁴⁸ Policy instruments can be a reference point in designing comparisons.⁴⁹ While choosing cases over dependent variable - focusing on what is affected- such as policies is the common approach, the selection over independent and intervening variables -those factors driving or mediating changes- affecting policies can directly influence case selections.⁵⁰ Scholars also choose among the “countries that produce the most interesting political outcomes in their

responses to migration and among the factors which a comparison makes sense, so, in a most-different or most-similar fashion.”⁵¹

Avoiding hyper-specialization in migration scholarly literature is necessary to be able to compare across countries. However, as one researcher cautions, comparative work “can only stem from specialistic competence in a specific place first in order to draw lines of commonality and difference.”⁵² For MENA, “insider knowledge on political systems, decision-making mechanisms and more informal processes of migrant/refugee integration are needed.”⁵³ To this end, using a triangulation method and consulting with country experts may help in filling gaps. To be aware of complications involved in data collection during field work, there is a necessity for “renewed caution and a heightened sense of awareness” and “maintaining a flexible fieldwork schedule” in relation to the changing security circumstances in the research environment.⁵⁴

When a researcher works on an analytical topic, examining the role of a single factor such as regime type or externalization (narrowing it as much as possible) may be helpful. Developing analytical tables is useful in designing comparisons even though these tables are subject to consistent change when revisiting arguments and testing them with the new data.

For cross-comparison cases, collaboration with other scholars can be useful in coping with the challenges of conducting comparative research in the region. One comparative researcher stated that “collaborations with colleagues from the region greatly help us to strengthen the quality of the research. Even participation in seminars and workshops in the region helps us to cope with the challenges of studying a less familiar setting.”⁵⁵ According to another researcher, “the benefits of collaboration have increased tremendously. In the past two years, I have made it important to extend collaborations with both junior and senior researchers—otherwise, the quality of the research suffers. Plus, “collaboration is key in what we do!”⁵⁶ Similarly, one prominent scholar said, “I was lucky to start working on my project at the same time that a number of other Ph.D. students and junior scholars began working on migration in the region. My discussions and collaborations with scholars from Lebanon and Jordan have been invaluable in thinking through my own research questions and analysis.”⁵⁷

For extending the coverage of comparisons in an inter-regional direction, extra caution is necessary. A researcher from an anthropology disciplinary background points out that “cross-continental comparisons may be also

meaningful, especially to fully grasp the complexities of North and South, and the extent to which such denominations make sense.”⁵⁸ Middle East-Africa or Middle East-South Asia comparisons can provide quite interesting insights.⁵⁹ For example, it is not quite shocking that Columbia’s welcoming response to Venezuelan people fleeing from dramatic economic crisis have similarities with Turkey and Lebanon’s response to Syrians? As another example, Pakistan’s policies regarding the protracted Afghan refugee issue have similarities with Jordan and Lebanon’s response to the protracted Palestinian refugee issue. Such examples require well-structured comparative studies that will challenge Middle Eastern exceptionalism.

Overall, comparative studies addressing MENA will contribute to providing objective evidence for scientific development and knowledge accumulation. They will also offer worthwhile routes to inform social and policy change. Conducting comparisons necessitates carefully crafted research design. Challenges are inherent component of comparisons that is possible tackled with by benefiting from both traditional and novel strategies.

Endnotes

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ARTICLE

Comparative Analysis of Migration Policies and Social Transformations in the MENA Region

Mohammed OUHEMMOU* & Mohamed El Amine MOUMINE**

Abstract

This article explores the historical developments of migration in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries. It investigates the major turning points in the history of migration in the region, and some of the major policies and regulations that have been adopted in reaction to the inflow of migrants and the political and economic considerations that have motivated such policies. It argues that in some countries, improvised and exclusionary policy schemes necessitated by short-term political objectives and factors related to the interests of the political system have exacerbated the conditions of the migrant population and limited the prospects of integration. Hence, Saudi Arabia persistently adopts a populist purge against migrants by aggressively pushing for nationalizing various job sectors that were previously occupied by immigrants. Other countries in the region, and more specifically in North Africa, have taken a pragmatic attitude toward migration. They have consequently given up their exclusionary and highly securitized approach to migration and adopted national migration strategies that have opened the door for upward social mobility as well as social and political participation.

Keywords

Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), migration policy, discrimination, human rights.

* Ph.D. candidate and researcher at Hassan II University, Casablanca, Morocco. E-mail: ouhemou@gmail.com. ORCID: 0000-0001-5988-6262

** Prof., Hassan II University, Casablanca, Morocco. E-mail: moumineamine@gmail.com. ORCID: 0000-0001-5098-1538.

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Introduction

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has become a major destination for migrants in the last 50 years. While the Middle East, and more specifically the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are a destination for thousands of migrants from Asian countries like India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, the region of North Africa has for long served as a transit space for migrants attempting to reach the EU. However, given the security measures imposed by the European Union, North Africa is becoming a final destination for thousands of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa. In brief, the inflow of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers has made the MENA region a major destination for international migrants. It is estimated that the region hosts approximately 34.5 million international migrants, which translates into 14 percent of the global migrant population.¹

This paper explores the migration policies and regulations adopted throughout the region since the period of independence (1950s and 1960s) until the present day. It argues that such policies offer some lessons that defy conventional wisdom. Among these lessons is the relevance of resources to the success of migration policies. The region shows that while the countries that are endowed with great natural and financial resources (Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Algeria) have failed to adopt comprehensive migration policies, the countries that have very limited resources (Tunisia, Morocco) and that were historically countries of emigration, have realized successful national migration policies. In other words, the countries of the region demonstrate great diversity in their reactions to the inflow of migrants and in terms of their capacities to develop adequate responses. For instance, while some countries continue to adopt exclusionary migration models, as is the case with the Kafala system² in the Gulf, they ignore the lessons from the “guest worker” programs and their failure in Europe. Other countries have reached the conclusion that such nationalist models are costly to maintain and have a negative impact on the country’s image and soft power. Therefore, they seek to forge migration policies that facilitate the integration of immigrants.

The investigation of migration policies adopted throughout the region reveals that exclusionary public attitudes, coupled with short-term and shortsighted policies, increase the vulnerability of migrants, limit the prospects of their political and social participation, and eventually further consolidate and reinforce xenophobic and discriminatory public attitudes. In fact, restrictive and exclusionary migration policies, as is the case in the GCC, only lead

to creating two parallel populations with minimal contact. In other words, citizens and migrants have limited contact which can translate into conflict in the future. The migrant-led riots and protests that took place in Saudi Arabia, the UAE and other GCC states constitute a case in point.

Shifting Global Migration Trends, Mixed Migrant Inflows and Diverse Policy Responses

There are various internal political considerations related to the interests of local elites, as is the case with Saudi Arabia, and the demands of strategic partners, as is the case with Morocco, represent major factors that shape migration policies in the MENA region. However, there are other external and far-reaching factors such as military conflicts, neocolonial practices, border externalization policies and globalization which profoundly affect migration patterns and policies in the MENA region. These external factors make migration patterns extremely fluid and dynamic in a way that imposes urgent and constantly changing policy challenges on the countries of the region.

Military conflicts and neocolonial endeavors have played a major role in the changing migration patterns in the MENA region, and are therefore imposing new policy questions on public officials. For example, prior to 2011, Libya hosted 2.5 million migrants from the Middle East, Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa.³ However, the NATO-led intervention in Libya in 2011 overnight turned these economic migrants into refugees and asylum seekers. Most of these refugees moved to other neighboring countries in the MENA region. The U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 also caused significant waves of migration. It is estimated that the war on Iraq led to the displacement of approximately four million Iraqis. More than two million of these migrants and refugees were displaced within the MENA region, while only 200,000 moved outside the Middle East.⁴ The Syrian revolution and subsequent international proxy war has also caused major population movement. It is estimated that the number of refugees and asylum-seekers generated by the conflict in Syria exceeds six million. Although the images of few hundreds of Syrian refugees heading toward the EU borders often attract the attention of the international media, the majority of these refugees are displaced within the Middle East. For instance, Turkey hosts 3,587,779 refugees, while Lebanon alone hosts approximately one million.⁵

As far as Sub-Saharan migration is concerned, recent data indicates that mobility in Africa takes place mostly within the region. In fact, 84 percent of

migration movement in West Africa takes place only within the region. For example, in the Côte d'Ivoire, 2,350,024 of the country's total immigrants (2,406,700) are actually living within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region. Similarly, a significant number of migrants from Burkina Faso choose to migrate within the region. Hence, there are 1,310, 892 migrants from Burkina Faso living in the Ivory Coast.⁶ However, such significant figures can radically fall, given the fact that many African states such as Chad, Guinea, Nigeria, Cameroon and Niger are ranked high in the fragile (failed) states index.⁷

The radically and rapidly changing political context in many African countries has a major impact on migration patterns in the MENA states, and an even more significant impact on the distinction between economic migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers. In other words, political fluidity in the region makes migration patterns highly unpredictable, and lines of distinction between migrants and refugees extremely blurred and fluid. For instance, in 2004, Sudan witnessed the signing of a historic peace agreement between the central government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army. Accordingly, this peace agreement meant that the situation of the country as "unsafe" was no longer valid. Therefore, the UNHCR suspended its RSD (Refugee Status Determination) process for all Sudanese persons applying for refugee status. Such a decision was inappropriate, given that the signing of the peace agreement did not necessarily mean that acts of war had completely ceased. In fact, even if it did apply to a certain extent to refugees from South Sudan, it did not necessarily apply to refugees from Darfur.⁸

Given the fact that Egypt hosts the world largest number of Sudanese refugees and asylum-seekers, the Egyptian government was forced to deal with the impact of what seemed to be such a minor shift in categorization. Directly after announcing the decision, a limited number of asylum-seekers tried to gather in front of the office of the UNHCR in Cairo to present a memorandum of protest. This spontaneous and unorganized act of protest initiated by few migrants evolved into a large-scale and well-organized sit-in that included an average of between 1,800 and 2,500 individuals. Given that Egypt was living under a state of emergency, after various negotiation rounds with the migrants, the Egyptian security forces initiated a violent operation to disperse the protestors. The operation led to a bloodbath and resulted in the death of 23 persons, half of whom were women and children.⁹

The MENA states are located at the epicenter of an international migration corridor. Consequently, policy makers need to continuously update the legislative framework and formulate new laws and regulations in order to properly address the challenges that such diverse

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population inflows create. In addition to the outside factors inherent in the globalization of conflicts in the region, there are other factors inherent in the political systems of the countries of MENA that often seek to create a split between citizens and the migrant population. The countries of the MENA region have witnessed major and historic social transformations that include increasing urbanism, massive growth of the service sector and increased access to basic education.¹⁰ However, migration has often been disconnected from these social transformations because the migration policies adopted by governments have mainly sought to limit the impact of human mobility on social transformation. The exclusion of Arab migrants from the migrant recruitment scheme in the 1960s represents just one attempt to isolate the oil-rich such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain countries from the major social changes related to the increased demand for democratic participation among the middle classes that was taking place in other Arab countries such as Egypt and Syria. Similarly, the major aim of current migration polices, especially in the GCC, is to homogenize the local population based on ethnic, religious and sometimes sectarian lines and exclude millions of foreign workers from any form of social or political participation. In many cases, migrants are viewed merely as imported labor; therefore, the social, material and symbolic borders between immigrants and citizens are highlighted. The segregated housing and extremely limited intermarriages between the locals and migrant workers manifest such boundaries which often lead to an increase in violence and racism against immigrants.

The Gulf Cooperation Council: Exclusion of Immigrants through Nationalization Policies

According to Fargues, migration toward the Middle East, and more specifically the countries of the GCC went through three major stages.¹¹ The first stage

was characterized by a preference for migrants from Arab countries given the cultural and religious affinities. Yet, such a preference would soon fade because of certain political and economic considerations. The second stage witnessed a preference for Asian migrants over Arab ones, mostly due to economic considerations. Finally, the last stage is characterized by a backlash against migration as a whole and an inclination to adopt further restrictive migration policies that seek to encourage migrants to leave the region.

The first stage was initiated in the 1930s thanks to crude oil exploration. During this period, oil production skyrocketed, which generated a tremendous inflow of foreign currency that was used to launch large-scale infrastructure building. This period coincided with nation-state building in the region. Therefore, financial resources were not only used to provide services, but to guarantee the loyalty of tribal leaders to the ruling families. The notions of nationality and national boundaries were alien to the countries of the region; people mostly identified themselves along family, ethnic or tribal lines.¹²

Moreover, contrary to Iran or Turkey, which have a history as distinct political and social units, many of the present Gulf monarchies emerged as a result of the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916. Therefore, there were attempts to consolidate the conception of the nation through the establishment of fixed borders and the adoption of nationality laws. However, during naturalization campaigns, many people failed to realize the importance of registering in order to acquire citizenship as they were mostly leading a nomadic lifestyle. This abrupt process of state formation caused the Middle East to have one of the highest numbers of stateless persons. Hence, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait alone have 163,000 stateless persons.¹³ In addition to stateless people, border disputes and conflicts displaced many people. For instance, the Iraq-Iran war of 1980–1988, which was partially motivated by disputes over the Shatt al-Arab waterway, displaced thousands of people from both the Iraqi and Iranian sides.¹⁴

During the first stage of immigration toward the Middle-East, most of the migrants in the region originated from neighboring Arab countries such as Egypt and Palestine. Arab migrants could easily be integrated with the local communities in the Gulf, given the linguistic, religious and cultural similarities. However, the Arab migrants represented a challenge for the local elites. There was the realization that the strong transnational networks the Arab immigrants had formed could potentially be used for political mobilization. Consequently, ethnic Arabs were no longer included in the naturalization

programs that various GCC states initiated in the 1960s. For instance, the amendments made to the Kuwaiti Nationality Laws in 1965 and 1966 were designed to consolidate the powers of the Kuwaiti nationalists by including the “illiterate” Bedouins who identified with the monarchy through tribal lines, and excluding educated Arab immigrants who backed Pan-Arabism.¹⁵ In parallel, there was a shift of preference in favor of Asian migrants over Arab ones despite all the cultural and linguistic affinities. In fact, strikes and labor unrests headed and organized by Arab immigrants, as occurred in 1954, led to the exclusion of Arabs from the migration scheme. The protests of 1954 were led by Arab workers who demonstrated against unequal pay, specifically the unfair and extremely low wages they received compared to their American counterparts. Arab migrants were politically conscious and therefore inclined to engage in organized political activism.¹⁶ The racist and discriminatory policies that Saudi companies such as ARAMCO adopted by paying Iraqi, Indian and African American engineers salaries that were significantly lower than the salaries paid to white Americans received little international attention. Subsequent events, such as the support proffered by many Palestinians affiliated with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait granted further legitimacy to policies that sought to exclude Arabs.¹⁷

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The second phase was characterized by a preference for Asian migrants. The increasing oil prices subsequent to the 1973 crisis provided the resources to launch further and larger industrial and development projects. The labor needed for such projects was provided mainly through bilateral agreements with home country governments.¹⁸ However, the sharp demand for labor could not be met by the offer made through official channels, and therefore independent recruiting agencies flourished, as did unscrupulous and abusive practices.¹⁹ Yet, recruiting migrants from countries like Bangladesh, India, the Philippines and Pakistan maintained a steady increase. Preference for Asian migrants over Arab ones was driven by both political and economic considerations. Unlike Arab migrants, Asian migrants were not politicized

and were not prone to protest, yet they were still considered a threat to the country's national identity. In the economic sphere, Asian migrants received significantly lower salaries; therefore, they drove the cost of development projects down. The same old issues of discriminatory wages were maintained, yet they faced little resistance. The 2015 Gulf Business Salary Survey highlights the discriminatory distribution of salaries in the GCC. For instance, a western migrant in Saudi Arabia was paid almost 30 percent more than an Asian migrant, while an Arab migrant received a pay six percent higher than that of an Asian migrant.²⁰

Despite the discriminatory nature of wages in the GCC, however, the inflow of migrants from countries like the Philippines, India and Bangladesh to the GCC continued to increase because of the huge gap between wages in these countries and those in the GCC.²¹ Therefore, the discriminatory nature of wages in the GCC had little impact on the inflow of migrants. Migrants could still make almost five times more than what they could have made at home while doing the same job.

The countries of the GCC have been consistently characterized as having an “open economy” yet a “closed society.” In other words, the state encouraged entrepreneurial activities that require the recruitment of extra migrant) labor. However, the society was closed in the sense that there were no paths to citizenship and migration policies were designed to prevent the creation of first generation immigrants or permanent residents.²² Therefore, the third phase reflected a desire to maintain and consolidate policies and regulations that prevent migrant integration and upward socioeconomic mobility. In fact, this phase was characterized by an incomprehensible backlash against immigration. Starting from the 2000s, the countries of the GCC set for themselves three major challenges: first, reducing dependence on foreign labor; second, increasing the participation of citizens in the national workforce; and finally, reducing the outflow of remittances. Various governments in the GCC have attempted to achieve these objectives, albeit through improvised and exclusionary policy schemes. These policies were often passed under the umbrella of nationalization, for example “Saudization” or “Emiratization.” Such policies sought to guarantee national unity and social cohesion through the exclusion of migrants. Consequently, they further reinforced the mental image of immigrants not as an integral part of society or as individuals who have contributed to its current state of welfare, but rather as dispensable and undesirable Others.

For instance, in early 2011, Saudi Arabia introduced an employment system called *Nitaqat* that sought to encourage Saudi companies and business holders to employ Saudi nationals instead of migrants.²³ The program was later reformed in 2016 in order to be part of the Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Saudi Vision 2030. The main idea of the program is to classify entities with more than six employees into six ranges, namely Red, Yellow, Low Green, Medium Green, High Green and Platinum as per their "job Saudization" rates, that is, the number of Saudi employees they had.²⁴ Companies are evaluated on the basis of their size and activities. Consequently, the top five percent of firms similar in terms of Saudization are placed in the Platinum Range, while the lowest five percent are placed in the Red Range. The services and facilities provided by government agencies such as the Ministry of Labor and Social development depend on such categorization. Hence, the official guidelines of *Nitaqat* clearly state:

The facilities and services provided by the Ministry of Labor and Social Development will help the Green and Platinum entities grow and expand and, as a result, employ more Saudis. In contrast, the entities in the Red and Yellow Ranges which fail to cooperate in Saudization and comply with the provisions of the Labor Law and its Executive Regulations will not enjoy such facilities. That may weaken their ability to retain their current workforce.²⁵

The *Nitaqat* program was intended to increase the participation of nationals in the job market and consequently decrease the number of migrants in the country. However, as Alshabri and his colleagues indicate, the Saudi educational system had not adequately prepared citizens to undertake some of the mid-level and high-level skill jobs that were filled by migrants.²⁶ In addition, the type of jobs and the required working hours prevented citizens from taking advantage of the *Nitaqat* program. Moreover, the fact that migrants were being paid a lot less than citizens provided very few incentives for the companies to recruit citizens. Instead, the *Nitaqat* programs only created the objective conditions for more corruption and fake Saudization. In brief, the so-called Saudization campaign as projected in "Vision 2030" has only forced migrants to leave Saudi Arabia and has failed to achieve its intended objective of providing jobs for Saudi nationals.²⁷

In fact, the implementation of the so-called nationalization policies has been accompanied by grave human rights abuses. For instance, between 2017 and

2018 the Saudi authorities launched mass arrest, detention and deportation campaigns against migrants. It is reported that during this period the Saudi authorities arrested approximately 670,000 migrants. News reports reveal that:

469,836 migrants were arrested for residency violations; 142,016 were arrested for breaking labor laws; 59,420 were arrested for breaching border security; and 1,300 persons were detained for providing accommodation and transport to 'illegal expatriates,' nearly 200 of whom were actually Saudi citizens.²⁸

The conditions under which those migrants were kept between arrest and deportation are unknown. The absence of transparency and public accountability or judiciary oversight in Saudi Arabia creates a scarcity of data with regard to the exact numbers and conditions of detention centers in the country.

In Saudi Arabia, deportation campaigns were employed to strictly decrease the number of migrants in the country. However, other more subtle and less violent measures were also used to incentivize migrants to return to their home countries. Hence, various GCC governments also sought to impose taxes on the remittances sent by immigrants as a way to curb the outflow of foreign currency from the region. For instance, in 2012, Saudi Arabia imposed an income tax on non-nationals, while Kuwait was discussing the possibility of reducing highly subsidized public services provided to non-nationals.²⁹ The adoption of such policies reflects the ideas and objectives set in the national visions of the GCC, which mostly sought to increase non-oil based revenues, reduce dependence of citizens on government subsidies and increase the participation of citizens in the national job market by reducing the number of immigrants.

Various forms of abuse are still practiced against immigrants, including passport withholding, physical and verbal abuse, denial of days off, contract substitution and unpaid overtime work. Female migrants face the double challenge of being migrants in a region that provides little protection for them and being women in male-dominant societies. For instance, the Arab region and more specifically the countries of the GCC and Lebanon host approximately 1.6 million domestic workers,³⁰ almost 20 percent of the world's total. Various reports highlight the abuses to which domestic workers are subjected. For example, a report conducted in Sri Lanka revealed that out of 8,087

complaints regarding abuses to domestic workers, half of the complaints came from Saudi Arabia. Human rights reports reveal various cases where the Saudi authorities failed to bring citizens who abuse domestic workers to justice.³¹ In fact, in the year 2000 alone, more than 19,000 domestic workers escaped from their sponsors in

Saudi Arabia because of mistreatment and abuses. Such a situation is more likely to deteriorate than be resolved, mostly because it is being normalized. For instance, Waldman reports that some facilities that train domestic workers in Sri Lanka often seek to soften and normalize the abuses that their domestic workers are likely to face in the GCC.³² The trainees are consistently told that the employers are always right and that “Mama [the employer] beats you and burns you if you do anything wrong.”³³

The same abusive practices against migrants differ in terms of scale and type. The countries of the GCC are not homogeneous in their response to the issue. Countries like Qatar and Kuwait have moved faster than Saudi Arabia in reforming their migration regulations. For instance, Kuwait adopted a new law in 2016 that sets the minimum wage and limits the number of extra hours for domestic workers. Similarly, the Emir of Qatar ratified law No. 15 regarding domestic workers in mid-August, 2018. This was qualified by a women’s right activist as “a positive step, if long overdue, that Qatar finally enacted labor rights law to protect its almost 200,000 domestic workers.”³⁴ Other countries in the region still resist change, and Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have not made modifications to their regulations related to domestic labor since 2012 despite the constant appeals of human rights groups. In fact, in many cases, policy reforms in the region have been more concerned with international criticism and the country’s image than resolving actual problems. Therefore, various laws and regulations have been adopted, but they are not accompanied by the tools or the desire that would ensure their implementation. For instance, the Saudi Ministry of Labor and Social Development claims to impose statutory fines on employers who confiscate their employees’ passports as a reaction to Cabinet Decision No. 166; however, reports reveal that this law is not actually being implemented.³⁵

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The continuing abuses against migrants, coupled with limited access to the legal system, have in many cases led migrants to engage in protests and organize and mobilize in demand of their rights. For instance, in mid-2008, Kuwait witnessed mass demonstrations organized by Asian migrants demanding their unpaid salaries. The media coverage at that time referred to this as “the revolution of the Asians.” The protests included approximately 7,000 migrants. The initial attempt to disperse the protests evolved into violent clashes and resulted in the injury of six migrants. After brief negotiations, the security forces cracked down on the migrants and arrested more than 700 who were later deported. Similarly, in early October 2018, hundreds of migrant workers organized a mass protest demanding their salaries after working several months without receiving any pay. The Saudi security forces intervened swiftly and opened fire on the protestors, which led to the death of one migrant. So far, no official or independent investigation has been conducted into the event and the Saudi authorities refuse to give any comments on the incident.³⁶ One explanation as to why no investigation was opened during the incident was that many of the workers had contacts with ARAMCO, the powerful state-owned oil company.³⁷

This latest event echoes various other past events, as it shows that the same security approach is being used to crackdown on migrants. For example, in November 2013, groups of migrant workers, mainly from Ethiopia, organized protests in the Manfouha district in Riyadh demanding their salaries. Security forces attacked the protesters which resulted in various injuries and two deaths.³⁸ It was also reported that Qatar had waves of protests organized by migrants. However, given the massive flow of fake news about Qatar in the context of the Gulf crises and the allegations made by Qatar’s rivals, it is hard to substantiate or verify such reports. These reports include news about a protest that was organized by Asian migrants in mid-April 2018.³⁹ In brief, the failure of various migration policies to achieve their intended effects, coupled with the absence of legal frameworks protecting the rights of migrants and the rise of unwelcoming public sentiments are pushing migrants toward further vulnerability that might breed more violence in the future.

As Castles points out, there are three major factors that contribute to the failure of migration policies: “factors arising from the social dynamics of the migratory process; factors linked to globalization and the North-South divide and factors arising within political systems.”⁴⁰ As far as migration policies in the GCC are concerned, they always contain such ingredients. For

instance, the backlash against immigration in the GCC set forward in the “nationalization” campaigns is only one of the manifestations of the social dynamics that control migration policies in the region. Building boundaries around nations through the exclusion and repression of migrants not only consolidates security-based approaches to migration issues, but also deprives migrants of their basic human rights and pushes them further into irregularity and vulnerability instead of integration.

Moreover, the nature of the political systems in the region has led to the development of migration policies that are unsustainable and costly to uphold. One of the major reasons why migration regulations in the GCC, and more specifically in Saudi Arabia, fail to achieve their intended objective is the fact that they rely on stakeholders to act against their own material interests. For instance, the Kafala system relies on both migrants and employers to act against their interests.⁴¹ It is based on short-term contracts, which in turn leads to the rotation of migrant workers and therefore prevents the creation of first generation immigrants or permanent non-citizens. Yet, given that companies and entrepreneurs have invested considerable time and resources in order to recruit migrants and train them, they have no incentive to replace their current workers with new ones who would need training. Workers, for their part, have no incentive to return home given the huge discrepancy in salary between the home and host countries. Therefore, the economic actors have no interest in upholding the guidelines set in the Kafala system, which in turn paves the way for suspicious and unscrupulous practices.

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From a normative standpoint, the Kafala system is based on the premise that the foreign visitor should be vetted and protected by his/her local host. The direct binding between the “guest” and the local host is supposed to prevent the guest from violating the local traditions and norms, and enjoy the protection bestowed on him by his/her host. Such an idea is quite primitive and almost impossible to maintain in the modern world, let alone the idea that a foreigner cannot distinguish what is right and what is wrong, and thus needs to be in the custody of a national. In brief, the Kafala system as well as many migration regulations in the GCC are quite hard to defend both from normative and rational standpoints. They are also very hard to successfully implement.

North Africa: Common Challenges, Various Policy Reactions

Despite limited resources, high rates of unemployment among nationals and low human and economic development indicators, various countries of North Africa have demonstrated an understanding of the need to develop comprehensive national migration and integration strategies. For instance, in 2014 Morocco adopted its “National Strategy of Migration and Asylum” while Tunisia announced in early 2013 a draft national migration and integration strategy. Oil producing countries like Algeria and Libya have not yet succeeded in developing a comprehensive national approach to migration. Libya continues to struggle to rebuild its state institutions which were devastated by the 2011 uprisings. Consequently, issues related to national reconciliation, peace-keeping efforts and the management of the country’s natural resources are prioritized over the migration issue.⁴² On the other hand, Algeria continues to adopt a security-based approach to migration. The demonstrations that forced President Bouteflika to resign have also disrupted political institutions in the country and brought the military to the fore. The rise of Ahmed Gaid Salah as a powerful figure shows that the military will remain a key player in Algerian politics, but also that Algeria’s security-based approach to migration will persist in the short and midterm.⁴³

The countries of North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Mauritania) have been countries of emigration since their independence. This means that the movement of the population has for a long time been outwards, mostly in the direction of Europe. A minority of highly educated individuals migrated to Canada and the U.S. Given the undemocratic nature of the region’s governments, emigrants were viewed with great suspicion. Political regimes feared that emigrants would use their political freedoms in the West to engage in anti-regime activism. They thought that political conflicts could be easily transferred from the home country to the host country, and vice versa.⁴⁴

However, various events have led such governments to realize the need to rely on emigrants in order to promote economic development. They realized that threats to the regime were mostly internal. For instance, Morocco witnessed various failed military coup attempts. In addition, economic stagnation has increased political dissent and made social protests and riots more frequent. The riots of Casablanca in 1965 and 1981, which turned into bloodbaths due to the brutal interference of the military are a case in point.⁴⁵ Consequently, the shift toward positive attitudes toward emigrants was both politically and

economically justified. As far as the economy is concerned, remittances sent by migrants served as an indispensable source of foreign currency, especially for non-oil-exporting countries like Morocco and Tunisia. The emigrants were also viewed positively because they were expected to come

back home with the capital and expertise they gained abroad and invest in national development projects. In fact, most MENA countries did not witness an economic rise or developmental leap as expected during their struggle for independence. Therefore, migration was viewed as a “safety valve” through which political pressure could be released. This also meant giving the unemployed and unhappy young population a chance to build their future in Europe instead of engaging in political activism at home.⁴⁶

In this context, the Moroccan state has encouraged emigration to Europe as part of a strategy to decrease political discontent and increase economic development in what has often been referred to as “le Maroc inutile.” As the French colonial system left a legacy of strong centralized state, the regions that had strong industrial infrastructure and were agriculturally productive were called “le Maroc utile,” or “the useful Morocco,” while the mountainous territories far from the center were deemed “useless” and were excluded from development projects, which eventually increased the risk of protest and rebellion against the central government. In Morocco, the Rif region represents a case in point. Similarly, in Tunisia, the policies adopted by President Habib Bourguiba (1957–1987), and later throughout the rule of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (1989–2011) tended to exploit the country’s peripheral regions in favor of the center. As a result, poverty was extremely high and economic development was very low in these regions, which included cities like Kairouane, Kasserine and Sidi Bouzid where the initial protests that eventually led to the “Jasmine Revolution” started.⁴⁷

The realization that high rates of unemployment and discontent among the young population could lead to mass political mobilization urged the governments of countries like Morocco and Tunisia to support emigration. For instance, Morocco signed many bilateral labor recruitment agreements

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with a number of European countries (e.g. with France in 1963, Belgium in 1964 and the Netherlands in 1969).⁴⁸ It is estimated that eight percent of the Moroccan population are emigrants. In fact, the remittances that Moroccan migrants sent home in 2017 represented 6.81 percent of the country's GDP.⁴⁹ Similarly, it is estimated that 10 percent of Tunisia's population resides abroad and 83 percent of those living abroad reside in the EU. Remittances sent by Tunisians represent four percent of the country's GDP.⁵⁰ Therefore, Tunisia has adopted various laws and decrees that establish certain favors for Tunisians residing abroad in terms of taxation. These include decree no. 2009-2162 of July 14, 2009 and Decree No. 95-197 of January 23, 1995.

Yet, not all of the outflow of migrants to Europe occurred through the official channels of the "guest worker" programs. Thousands of people have used the Mediterranean Sea to cross to the EU countries irregularly. Similarly, thousands of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa have used the countries of North Africa as a transit to flee to Europe. However, the signing of the Schengen Agreement meant that while the EU worked hard to remove its internal borders and therefore facilitate the free movement of people and products, it tried harder to strengthen and consolidate its external borders. Consequently, various border control and surveillance systems were installed across the Mediterranean Sea. More military and naval forces were deployed in the region to prevent migrants from reaching the EU countries.⁵¹ For instance, Spain installed a state-of-the-art surveillance system called the Integrated System of External Vigilance (SIVE). Various advanced pieces of equipment such as radar units, infrared cameras and video cameras were installed along the Straits of Gibraltar and the Canary Islands in order to detect and intercept vessels coming from the other side of the Mediterranean.⁵² On the EU level, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, also known as Frontex, was established in 2005 in order to facilitate collaboration in the management of the EU's external borders. However, the securitization of the EU's borders has not stopped the inflow of migrants. It has only made migration more dangerous and costly.⁵³ In fact, the latest data reveal that in 2019 alone, 10,656 migrants and asylum-seekers successfully crossed the Mediterranean Sea and landed in Spain, Italy and Greece. However, it is also estimated that 854 individuals died in the same period while attempting to cross. The figure below shows that the numbers of deaths and incidents of missing persons have been consistently high.

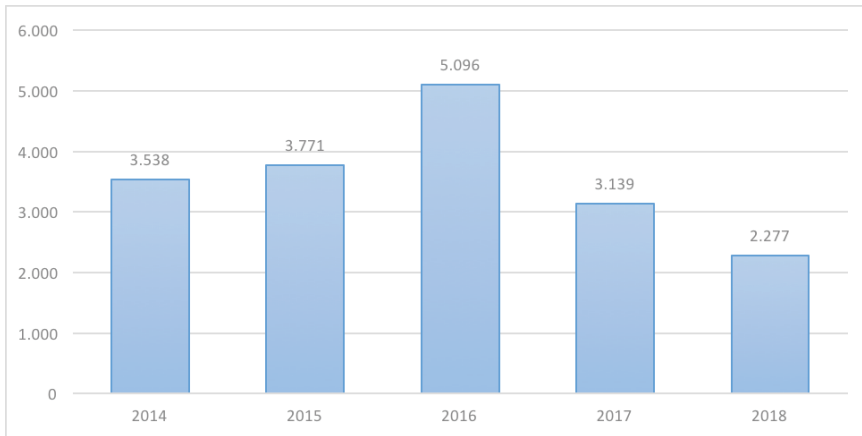


Figure 1: Officially recorded number of deaths and missing people in the Mediterranean Sea (2014–2018)

Source: UNHCR, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>.

In addition to securitizing its borders, the EU also encouraged transit countries like Morocco and Tunisia to engage in a war against immigration and act as a buffer zone for Europe.

The EU offered technical help for border control as well as political and economic incentives for transit states. For instance, in 2005 it funded projects totaling 40 million Euros in order to reinforce security measures in Morocco.⁵⁴ Libya also signed an agreement in late 2008 that allowed joint patrols in Libyan waters. Yet, this agreement was hard to implement given the discord between some EU state members. Eventually, in 2009, Italy accused Malta and its coastal guards of diverting 40,000 migrants and refugees toward Italy.⁵⁵

In addition to securitizing its borders, the EU also encouraged transit countries like Morocco and Tunisia to engage in a war against immigration and act as a buffer zone for Europe.

However, responding to the EU’s combat against migration has not come without costs. For instance, in early October 2005, groups of Sub-Saharan migrants estimated to be around 600 stormed the fence separating Morocco from the Spanish-occupied cities of Ceuta and Melilla. The migrants used homemade ladders to climb over the barbed wire fences separating the Moroccan-Spanish border. The Moroccan border control guards who were described by *The Guardian* as “trigger-happy” opened fire on the migrants

and five were shot dead.⁵⁶ This incident and various subsequent events drew international attention to the Moroccan-EU approach to the issue of migration. For instance, the EU Commission's Vice-President Franco Frattini commented on the Ceuta and Melilla incident, stating: "This awful tragedy is another demonstration of the urgent need to step up our joint efforts to manage migration more effectively."⁵⁷ Various events that followed highlight the fact that securitization of the borders is not enough, as it only increases the number of victims and urges smugglers to adopt more advanced and sophisticated methods.⁵⁸

Legal frameworks have also been adopted to combat irregular migration. For instance, in 2003, Morocco adopted Law No. 02-03 regarding the entry and stay of foreigners.⁵⁹ The new law was criticized by various human rights groups for providing legal ground for abusive practices against migrants. For instance, articles 34 and 35 of the law make it possible to detain migrants for a period of time that can be extended up to 26 days, while the detention zones do not fall under the authority of the Ministry of Justice, and thus are not subject to judicial oversight.⁶⁰ One year later, Tunisia also adopted Law No. 2004-6 in response to the EU's efforts to criminalize migration across the Mediterranean Sea.⁶¹ According to this law, assisting, hosting or transporting irregular migrants and refugees can lead to a three-month prison sentence and/or a fine of 500 dinars.⁶² Algeria adopted a similar law in 2008—Law No. 08-11—regarding the entry and stay of foreigners. Similar to the laws passed in Morocco and Tunisia, this law established various measures that violate the human rights of migrants. For example, article 24 stipulates that any individual who fails to leave the country after being ordered to do so by the local authorities is subject to a prison sentence of two to five years. The appropriate legal channels through which migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers can appeal against such a decision are not included in the law.⁶³ Since the adoption of the law, Algeria has consistently deported or repatriated migrants. Between 2017 and 2018, it forcibly repatriated more than 6,500 migrants. Reports also reveal that each year, approximately 3,000 migrants and asylum-seekers were expelled from Algeria prior to 2018.⁶⁴ Such abusive practices against migrants have caused various diplomatic disputes between Algeria and various African states such as Nigeria and Guinea.⁶⁵ In addition to Law No. 08-11, Algeria adopted Law No. 09-01 in 2009 in order to curb the irregular outflow of migrants. According to this law, irregular exit from the national territory by foreigners and citizens alike is punishable by a prison sentence of two to six months.

One of the first calls for a new and humanitarian migration policy on the southern side of the Mediterranean came from Morocco. In late 2013, the King of Morocco called for a “new vision for a national migration policy that is humanist in its philosophy, responsible in its approach and pioneering at the regional level.”⁶⁶ This call was motivated both by good intentions and vested self-interest. Morocco’s collaboration with the EU caused great inconvenience for the Moroccan leadership, and its war against irregular migration harmed Morocco’s image among the African states and in the reports of human rights organizations.⁶⁷ Moreover, the security measures and the advanced security apparatus proved unable to deter migrants from undertaking the journey though the Mediterranean Sea.⁶⁸ Following the King’s statement, the Ministry of Migration Affairs and Moroccans Residing Abroad announced the country’s “National Strategy for Migration and Asylum.”⁶⁹ The new strategy covered various areas such as education, health, social assistance, and employment. As far as education is concerned, prior to the adoption of the national strategy on migration, Sub-Saharan migrants had extremely limited access to the country’s educational system. However, once the policy was announced, Circular No. 13-487 adopted by the Ministry of National Education ended all of the legal and administrative barriers that had for long excluded migrants from education.⁷⁰ Similar measures were adopted to facilitate the access of migrants to the job market and health services.

Similar to Morocco, despite having limited resources and an unstable political situation, the Ministry of Social Affairs in Tunisia announced in late 2014 a draft national strategy on migration. According to the Ministry of Social Affairs, two divisions within the ministry were established in the post-Jasmine Revolution era: The General Division for Planning and Follow-up is responsible for communicating with Tunisians residing abroad and receiving returnees as well as asylum seekers who face difficulties. These directorates include departments such as Planning and Foresight, Follow-up and Communication, and Monitoring and Analysis. The second directorate, namely the General Directorate for International Cooperation, is responsible for exploring the possibility of consolidating means of bilateral and multilateral international cooperation in the field of migration, and constructing the legal and administrative mechanisms that guarantee the rights of migrants.⁷¹ Although the new policy has not been followed by regularization campaigns as was the case with Morocco, the move still sets another precedent in the MENA region, since it highlights the need to develop a comprehensive national strategy that paves the way for integration and citizenship.

The policy came as a reaction to the increasing number of Sub-Saharan migrants in the country. Currently, Tunisia serves as a country of transit and, to a lesser extent, a country of final destination for thousands of Sub-Saharan migrants. The latest official data reveals that between 2004 and 2014 the number of foreign nationals residing in Tunisia has increased from 35,192 to 53,490—a 66 percent increase. These figures do not include the approximately 10,000 migrants who reside in the country in an irregular way. The policy was also introduced in order to respond to concerns expressed about the difficulties that migrants face in accessing education and health services. One study reveals that migrants lack any legal mechanisms through which they can regularize their status once their temporary residence permit expires. They consequently lack legal protection and often become targets of criminal activities such as robberies and scams.⁷²

Therefore, the announcement of the national strategy was followed by the adoption of various regulations and ministerial circulars that aimed at facilitating the access of migrants, specifically Sub-Saharan migrants, into various services such as health and education. For instance, on October 17, 2017, the Tunisian Ministry of Health announced Circular No. 53, which sought to facilitate the access of foreign nationals to private and public health facilities, and to establish a special medical register for foreign patients. Prior to this, the Ministry of Health had adopted Circular No. 95 on October 7, 2015 to facilitate the access of refugees coming from Syria and Libya to the country's health sector. The final version of the national strategy has not yet been announced, as Tunisia is still going through a democratic transition.

Conclusion

Starting from the 1990s, the countries in North Africa have changed from sending countries to transit countries and finally to final destination countries for Sub-Saharan migrants. Many countries in North Africa have realized the uselessness of exclusive migration policies and consequently developed national migration and integration strategies despite having limited resources.

Starting from the 1990s, the countries in North Africa have changed from sending countries to transit countries and finally to final destination countries for Sub-Saharan migrants.

For instance, Morocco and Tunisia have adopted various measures that facilitate the access of migrants to education, health services and the job market, consequently facilitating their socio-economic integration and upward social mobility.

Oil rich countries in the Middle East and more specifically the GCC member states continue to adopt exclusionary migration models that do not pave the way to either integration or citizenship. Instead, they adopt policies that not only fail to achieve their intended outcomes, but produce various negative effects. For instance, nationalization campaigns in Saudi Arabia and the UAE have reduced the number of migrants in the country without increasing the employment rates of citizens. This is an issue that will certainly affect the economic development of the region and further destabilize its social structure.

Although the countries of the GCC and North Africa cannot be viewed as homogenous units, Algeria's approach to the inflow of migrants is similar to the one adopted by the GCC countries. Similarly, the countries of the GCC are not strictly homogenous. For instance, while the UAE and Saudi Arabia have further consolidated their "nationalization" policies through the exclusion of migrants, Qatar has shown signs of reform. However, the general trend within the GCC is rejection and exclusion, a trend that is strengthened by the nationalist discourse. The current backlash against immigration is only one of the manifestations of resistance in the face of inclusion. It is a rejection of the new social and demographic realities. Yet, the increasing frequency of migrant-led protests indicates that such an attitude is difficult and expensive to maintain. On the other hand, the overall trend in North Africa reflects a pragmatic and less nationalist approach to migration. Therefore, the North African states adopt national migration strategies whose major aim is to promote the integration of migrants.

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ARTICLE

Compatibility of the Safe Third Country Concept with International Refugee Law and its Application to Turkey

Gamze OVACIK*

Abstract

The safe third country concept emerged at the end of 1980s as an antidote for the protection challenges associated with the travel routes of refugees. However, practices involving safe third country transfers have ended up rendering refugees' access to asylum even more difficult. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate, based on the example of Turkey, the challenges in refugee protection that the safe third country transfers create. The article begins with an overview of Turkey's situation with respect to trans-border migratory dynamics and Turkey's areas of engagement with international law on migration and asylum. Then, the evolution of the safe third country concept is analyzed with special reference to contributions made by Turkey. Finally, the current state of affairs and future prospects are discussed in view of Turkey's position as a safe third country with respect to EU countries, particularly with the execution of the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016 and the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement. In conclusion, with the execution of these two instruments, Turkey seems to have compromised its position regarding the conditions of the safe third country concept. Considering the current state of affairs, wherein the EU seems determined to make full use of the safe third country concept with respect to Turkey, Turkey's interpretation and attitude will continue to be crucial for the evolution of the safe third country concept, on account of the scale of transit asylum and migration flows through Turkey.

* Ph.D. Candidate, Bilkent University, Faculty of Law, Ankara, Turkey and Guest Researcher at the Center for Migration Law, Radboud University, Faculty of Law, Netherlands. E-mail: gamze.ovacik@bilkent.edu.tr. ORCID: 0000-0002-3665-1097.

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Introduction

This article seeks to address one of the notions that are currently most debated in international refugee law: the safe third country concept. This notion was presented as a solution to the “asylum shopping” or “refugees in orbit” phenomenon when it emerged in the late 1980s. Thus, the purpose was arguably to ensure that refugees do not change countries after they escape persecution and find international protection at the first instance possible. However, the practices involving safe third country transfers rely on the inadmissibility of asylum applications in cases where the refugees do not run directly away from persecution, and tend to render their access to asylum more difficult.

The purpose here is to display the protection challenges that the safe third country concept creates through the example of Turkey. The basis for this will be Turkey’s establishment as a safe third country for EU states through the execution of the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016 and the agreement between the EU and the Republic of Turkey on the readmission of persons residing without authorization (the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement). To establish the background, Turkey’s engagement with international refugee law in general, and the safe third country concept in particular will be explored. For this aim, the analysis commences by situating Turkey with respect to trans-border migratory dynamics and outlining its areas of engagement with international law on migration and asylum. Then, the evolution of the safe third country concept will be analyzed with special reference to the political position taken and contributions made by Turkey. Finally, the current state of affairs and future prospects will be discussed in view of Turkey’s position as a safe third country with respect to the EU countries.

Turkey’s Position with Respect to Trans-border Migratory Dynamics

In order to comprehend the ways in which Turkey engages with international law on asylum and migration, we should first build an understanding of its position within the realm of various trans-border movements throughout

its history. Mobility through Turkey's borders has always been an important reality as well as a policy area for the Republic of Turkey, starting with immigration from the Balkans and a population exchange with Greece during its nation-state building efforts

in the initial years of the Republic, and continuing with the recent mass influx of refugees from Syria. In fact, Turkey has witnessed a great variety of human mobility through its borders, the most significant waves of which are the emigration of Turkish workers to Germany in the 1960s, and transits and incoming flows at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s triggered by the collapse of the Soviet Union and conflicts in Iran and Iraq. Also, relatively recent flows of labor migrants, students and retirees, as well as continual asylum flows are among the important components of Turkish migratory dynamics.

To be more specific, the categorization by İçduygu, Erder and Gençkaya paints a more detailed picture encompassing the main incoming and outgoing trans-border flows affecting Turkey.¹ Historically, incoming asylum and migratory movements to Turkey have consisted of flows of Turkish Muslims from former Ottoman territories in the Balkans, starting from the establishment of the Republic in 1923 through the 1950s; flows from Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan starting in the 1980s due to political and economic unrest; a mass influx of ethnic Turks from Bulgaria in 1989 due to the pressures they were facing for reasons related to religion and ethnicity; a mass influx from northern Iraq in 1991 due to the Gulf War; circular and irregular labor migration from former Soviet Union states after its collapse; mixed transit movements including asylum seekers, mixed flows containing different groups such as economic migrants and victims of human trafficking from underdeveloped countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan; retirement migration to the western and southern coasts of Turkey from Western European countries; and finally the mass influx from Syria that started in 2011 as a result of the ongoing internal conflict. In counterbalance, the main outgoing flows from Turkey have consisted of the displacement of Armenians in 1915; the 1960s Turkish guest worker emigrations to Europe; returns to Europe in the aftermath of World War II; and an asylum flow of citizens from Turkey in the aftermath of

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the 1980 military coup. In addition, Turkish-Greek population exchange in accordance with the Lausanne Treaty in 1923, as well as highly-skilled labor and student migration through the increased global mobility of capital and people, appear as flows with both an immigration and emigration component. Today, by being country hosting the world's largest refugee population of around 3.6 million, consisting of 3.58 million Syrians and 56,000 people of other nationalities under temporary protection, Turkey's regional and global significance with respect to the management of international human mobility is ever-increasing.²

As seen from the variety of its components, human mobility around Turkey largely consists of mixed migration flows. This creates challenges in terms of international protection because it is difficult to differentiate refugees from others, including different types of migrants. It has been observed frequently in the aftermath of the Syrian conflict that migrant smugglers and human traffickers travel together with those being smuggled or trafficked, and that persons migrating in search of better economic conditions choose the same travel means as those fleeing conflicts. Difficulties arise especially at the stage of first contact with officials and with respect to identification. Thus, it should be kept in mind that the mixed nature of these flows poses challenges in ensuring that those in need of protection get the kind of protection they need.

The background of the diverse dynamics of Turkey's trans-border human mobility, in fact rests on the country's geopolitical position, which is probably

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one of the most recurrent themes in the context of international politics concerning Turkey. International migration is one of the areas that reminds us why this characteristic is mentioned so frequently. Indeed, for the region to its south-east, Turkey serves as a safe haven for those fleeing conflicts, persecution and poverty; for the countries to its west, it serves as a buffer zone

relieving the pressures of the influx of migrants and asylum seekers. Analyses of the contemporary dynamics of trans-border human mobility show us that, in addition to being a sending country and transit country for migratory

flows, Turkey is also a country of destination, especially with respect to asylum as well as regular and irregular labor migration, significantly contributing to its economic growth.

Due to its longstanding and substantial experience with respect to international migration and asylum flows, Turkey has always been a key regional and global actor in terms of the creation of international and regional law and policies related to asylum and migration. It has also extensively engaged with the shaping of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951 Convention), the cornerstone of international law on asylum, through discussions at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Executive Committee and United Nations (UN) General Assembly Meetings.³ Thus, Turkey is a key player in relation to the progress of international law on asylum and migration.

Turkey's Areas of Engagement with International Law on Asylum and Migration

Considering the diversity of human mobility surrounding Turkey, its engagement with international law concerning asylum and migration is also multi-dimensional. For instance, several efforts have taken place at the international level for establishing a framework for temporary protection in cases of mass influx. These efforts include

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the publication of the Guidelines on Temporary Protection or Stay by the UNHCR⁴ and the adoption of the Temporary Protection Directive⁵ by the EU, which to date remains to be implemented. Thus, the temporary protection regime implemented by Turkey is one of the few examples where a mass influx situation is being addressed by the implementation of a national, normative framework regulating the conditions and scope of temporary protection in detail. This situation will surely contribute to the evolution of the international understanding of the concept of temporary protection in international refugee law.

Moreover, Turkey is among the few immigration countries party to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families,⁶ which enhances the significance of the convention. Turkey has assumed a leading role in inter-governmental

cooperation platforms on migration, such as the Budapest Process⁷ and the Forum on Migration and Development,⁸ which increases the soft power attached to such fora.

Finally, another area of engagement for Turkey concerns the overlap between international law on asylum and migration and international human rights law. This area constitutes the vertical dimension of this field, namely the relationship between the state and the individual. In this respect, cases brought against Turkey by asylum seekers before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), such as *Jabari v Turkey*,⁹ *Mamatkulov and Askarov v Turkey*,¹⁰ *Abdolkhani and Karimnia v Turkey*¹¹ and *Ghorbanov and Others v Turkey*,¹² have yielded to landmark judgments by the ECtHR.¹² This is not a proud contribution on behalf of Turkey, yet at the same time, it is a major one that cannot be disregarded when considering Turkey's engagement with international law on asylum and migration. These cases are especially important because the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) does not expressly provide for a right to asylum. Thus, human rights protection for asylum seekers is made available within the ECHR, mainly through the interpretation of other rights enshrined in the Convention. These consist of the right to life and the right to be free from torture and inhumane and degrading treatment and punishment, in the context of the return of foreigners; the right to freedom and security, in the context of the administrative detention of foreigners; and the right to effective remedies in connection with these rights. It should be emphasized that Turkey's engagement with the ECHR framework concerning asylum seekers and migrants is reciprocal. Whereas cases brought against Turkey before the ECtHR have contributed to international jurisprudence for the implementation of human rights principles in the context of asylum and migration, they have also contributed to the improvement of the international protection and return system in Turkey. These judgments eventually played an important role in initiating comprehensive legal and administrative reform in Turkey. As a result, the Law on Foreigners and International Protection,¹³ which is Turkey's first law on asylum and migration, was adopted in 2013 and the Directorate General for Migration Management¹⁴ was established as a specialized administrative authority to carry out all procedures related to migration and international protection.

Having outlined Turkey's position with respect to trans-border human mobility and the international framework that governs it, the rest of this paper will focus on what I believe is one of the most critical and controversial concepts within

the contemporary dynamics of international refugee law; namely the “safe third country” concept. Turkey’s engagement with international refugee law at the horizontal level of inter-state relationships is to some extent materialized in the evolution and implementation of the “safe third country” concept in international law on asylum.

Evolution of the Safe Third Country Concept

Definition and Legal Basis

The “Safe third country” concept does not originate directly from the 1951 Convention, the main legal instrument establishing the international legal regime for refugee protection. The concept emerged in the late 1980s, four decades after the adoption of the Convention, through the unilateral practice of

Western states seeking to restrict the arrival of asylum seekers to their territories and asylum systems. The claimed purpose of the safe third country concept is to address the “refugees in orbit” phenomenon, whereby refugees are “shuttled from one country to another in a constant

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quest for protection”¹⁵ without being refouled or expelled, but also without access to international protection. It was argued that this situation is a result of irregular, secondary movements of asylum seekers from countries where they could have sought protection after fleeing persecution. Thus, coming from a safe third country serves as a ground for the inadmissibility of an asylum claim; developed states have increasingly implemented schemes to send asylum seekers back to safe third countries through which they had passed after leaving their countries of origin.¹⁶ In implementing this concept, states mainly rely on Articles 33 and 31 of the 1951 Convention as a legal basis.

As per Article 33 of the 1951 Convention, it is forbidden for state parties to send a refugee to “the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would

be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.” In seeking to implement safe third country returns, states argue that the prohibition on the transfer of asylum seekers is legally limited to situations involving the above-mentioned threats to life or freedom by virtue of the principle of non-refoulement enshrined in Article 33 of the 1951 Convention. Thus, in their view, if the prohibition of transfer is limited to the listed instances, other transfers that do not trigger the outlined threats are permissible. Therefore, based on interpretation *a contrario*, the transfer of asylum seekers to safe third countries where no such threats exist should be possible.¹⁷

Another provision on which defenders of the safe third country concept rely is Article 31 of the 1951 Convention, which prohibits states from imposing penalties on refugees “coming directly” from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened on account of their illegal entry to or presence in that territory. The proponents of the “safe third country” concept argue that, since the provision provides the non-penalization of refugees who came directly from countries where they face risk of persecution, such obligation does not apply to refugees who came indirectly, by passing through other countries where they do not face any risk of persecution, before lodging an asylum claim in the host state. Thus, by isolating this reference of “coming directly” from its specific context of the non-penalization of refugees for irregular modes of travel, it is interpreted as a general obligation on the part of asylum seekers to seek refuge at the earliest instance possible.¹⁸

This interpretation deserves criticism, because it does not reflect the true spirit of international cooperation affirmed in the preamble of the 1951 Convention. This is best explained with reference to the vision of the international refugee protection system in a world where we absolutely accept that refugees must seek protection in the countries they can access directly upon escaping from risk against their lives or freedom in their country of origin or residence. In such a world, given the deterrence measures such as carrier sanctions or visa policies, it is almost impossible for a refugee fleeing persecution to reach the countries in the Global North directly. This means that in the ultimate global order where the refugees behave in accordance with the conditions of “coming directly” from persecution and staying in the first country that they reach upon fleeing, in practice, means that refugees are to be hosted exclusively by the countries neighboring their country of origin or residence. This would be the equivalent of saying that all of the world’s refugees should stay in the

countries immediately neighboring the refugee producing countries. What constitutes responsibility sharing in international refugee law has been a heated debate without a conclusive answer. As much as it is difficult to reach a definite answer as to what exactly international cooperation in international refugee law should look like, it is safe to say that it does not look like a world where refugees are only hosted by the countries that happen to share a border with the refugee producing countries.

Beyond these legal bases within the framework of the 1951 Convention, in order for the implementation of the safe third country concept, the conditions for its functioning in practice are important. In order for the safe third country concept to be operational in reality, the sending states are dependent on the consent of the receiving “safe third countries” to accept the return of such asylum seekers. Unlike the duty to admit their own citizens, there is not a general principle in international law obliging states to readmit third country nationals to their territory. Moreover, for the sending states to continue to be bound by the principle of non-refoulement, which is accepted to be a part of customary international law,¹⁹ such transfers must be in conformity with this principle. Thus, the formalization of the safe third country concept has occurred through international legal instruments ranging from UNHCR Executive Committee Conclusion No. 15²⁰ and Conclusion No. 58²¹ justifying the implementation of the concept, to the relevant provisions of the Asylum Procedures Directive of the EU,²² to readmission agreements creating international legal obligations for their parties to admit alien returnees. Readmission agreements regulate the modalities of safe third country transfers and their execution is generally coupled with financial or diplomatic incentives such as visa facilitation or development aid to ensure cooperation by the receiving countries. On the other hand, they traditionally lack safeguards for the protection of asylum seekers in the safe third country and for ensuring the implementation of safe third country returns in a manner compatible with international refugee and human rights law.²³ They include no more than mere references to the standards of treatment in the 1951 Convention without providing any mechanism for the supervision of returns or any remedy in case of failure of satisfaction of such conditions.

As a result, it is generally accepted that in order for safe third country transfers to be acceptable under international law, there should be no risk of refoulement, persecution or other serious harm for the asylum seeker in the receiving state

and there should be a possibility to claim and receive international protection in accordance with the 1951 Convention. Also, it is accepted that the applicability of safe third country transfers must be assessed on a case-by-case basis whereby the possibility exists for the returnee to challenge the application of the concept in his/her case. Lastly, safe third country transfers should not be implemented based on mere transit from a country, and the asylum seeker should have a connection or close links with the third state.²⁴

At first glance, the dependence of applicability of safe third country returns on these conditions would seem to render such returns unproblematic. At the end of the day, when these conditions are fulfilled, it is ensured that asylum seekers find protection in line with international refugee law. However, while we are busy with the discussions related to the standards that should be present in the receiving country for the return to be considered safe, we tend to overlook the real problem. As the practice stands, it is always the country seeking to enforce the return that undertakes an assessment of the safety of the third country. The question of whether a country satisfies the conditions for the safe third country concept is always asked and answered unilaterally by the state that is trying to conduct returns. Therefore, no matter how high the threshold is with respect to safety in theory, in practice the assessment can never be an objective one and the tendency to favor returns always prevails. Therefore, setting aside the discussions as to whether it is even possible or feasible to establish supervisory mechanisms that actually warrant that the foreseen standards in safe third countries of return are satisfied, the real problem arises from the fact that the outcome of the evaluation of conditions for the applicability of such returns is almost predetermined.

For these reasons, in practice, the safe third country concept exacerbates the “refugees in orbit” situation that it allegedly seeks to tackle and reinforces the “deterrence paradigm” dominating the field of asylum.²⁵ Similar measures include procedural obstacles before access to asylum, such as time limits, application of the concepts of the first country of asylum and safe country of origin, carrier sanctions, visa policies and cooperation schemes between countries of origin and transit to suppress asylum and other migratory flows.²⁶ Such deterrent policy tools conflict with the spirit of the 1951 Convention and create a climate in transit countries within which rights breaches may occur.²⁷ Moreover, in order to alleviate the burden posed by these deflection tools, transit countries tend to adopt similar policies whereby they try to shift the responsibility further away from themselves.²⁸

Turkey's Contributions to the Evolution of the Safe Third Country Concept

Turkey's position regarding the issues related to the safe third country concept are substantially reflected in its statements at the 36th, 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st sessions of the Executive Committee of the UNHCR held at the time of the emergence of the concept in state practice and international law in the late 1980s.²⁹ The conclusions of the Executive Committee of the UNHCR are not legally binding per se; however, they are important soft law instruments for the purpose of ensuring consistency among states in the implementation of the 1951 Convention and providing guidelines for questions of interpretation. Accordingly, Turkey's statements as an important transit country for asylum flows reflect the protection challenges and uneven burden among states that is caused by the implementation of the safe third country concept.

Key points raised by the Turkish government's representatives related to the safe third country concept are as follows:

*i. Respect for the refugees' right to choose a country of asylum*³⁰

Being allowed to seek asylum in their country of choice is a privilege of the asylum seekers; accordingly, respect for their expressed wish in this regard constitutes a basic guiding principle.³¹ The choice between local integration and resettlement should be made in light of the desire expressed by the asylum seekers themselves in addition to the conditions in the host country.³² Therefore, more weight should be given to resettlement as a form of responsibility-sharing to alleviate the burden placed on the shoulders of transit countries and to serve the best interests of refugees.³³

ii. Mere transit should not constitute a basis for safe third country transfer

Movements of refugees and asylum seekers who were only in transit through another country should not be considered irregular movements.³⁴

iii. Causes for irregular movements and abuse of the right to seek asylum

The problems of irregular movements and abuse of the right of asylum must be treated as a whole by addressing the root causes.³⁵ However, while the elimination of the root causes of refugee movements awaits resolution, new refugee-generating situations are emerging.³⁶

Lengthy and restrictive resettlement processes drive refugees to desperation and cause irregular movements of refugees into developed third countries.³⁷ Undue visa restrictions to control migratory flows and the demand for a

low-cost and therefore illegal labor force in some sectors of the economies of highly-industrialized countries provoke abuses of the asylum system.³⁸

iv. Impacts on transit countries and refugee protection

The influx of asylum seekers into countries of first asylum or transit creates a risk of erosion of the principle of non-refoulement due to difficulties of repatriation and the progressively more restrictive practices of other destination countries. Restrictive measures taken by developed countries cause developing countries to adopt similar restrictive measures in order to be able to cope with refugee influx. Instances of refoulement due to the inability to continue bearing the burden would not be the fault only of the latter countries, since the responsibility for ensuring the conditions necessary for the observance of the non-refoulement principle rests with the international community as a whole.³⁹

v. Need for international responsibility sharing

The international community has a collective duty to find solutions based on the principles of equitable responsibility sharing for the problems that increasing refugee influx causes in destination as well as transit countries. Considering that the majority of the world's refugee population is hosted in developing and often least developed countries of first asylum and transit, these countries have already done more than their fair share to meet the humanitarian challenges and should not be expected to bear any additional burdens.⁴⁰ It would be wrong to perceive these countries as permanent havens wherein the movement farther west or north could be contained.⁴¹ Resettlement quotas remaining limited in the face of the increasing number of asylum seekers arriving in transit countries leads to the accumulation of asylum seekers in transit countries, contrary to the principles of international responsibility sharing and solidarity. Financial and material aid alone do not address the social and political problems associated with refugee influx in these countries. The heavy burden on developing countries could only be alleviated if developed countries adopted more flexible resettlement policies, especially for regions where local integration is not feasible. Modest resettlement quotas by further destination countries are not well-balanced and the situation of asylum seekers awaiting resettlement requires more effective action.⁴²

Current State of Affairs Regarding the Implementation of the “Safe Third Country” Concept in Turkey

In light of the above analyses regarding the conditions and legality of the safe third country concept, the current state of affairs concerning the

implementation of safe third country practices with respect to Turkey will be evaluated here.

With the adoption of the EU-Turkey Statement⁴³ on March 18, 2016, Turkey agreed to take back all of the irregular migrants passing from Turkey to Greece after this date. Also, the provisions of the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement⁴⁴ relating to third country nationals and stateless persons became applicable as of October 2017.⁴⁵ With the execution of these two instruments, Turkey seems to have compromised its position regarding the conditions for the applicability of the safe third country concept outlined above. It is especially remarkable that the scope of the readmission obligation arising from the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement is much wider than that of the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016. It extends retroactively to irregular migrants who had entered EU countries through Turkey within the preceding five years, regardless of whether their initial entry into EU territory was through irregular channels or whether their status

became irregular later on. Also, transit through, in addition to stay in Turkey, is outlined as a basis triggering readmission obligations for Turkey and a wide range of documents are accepted as proof, including hotel bills, doctor appointment cards or credit card receipts. Thus, both the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016 and the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement appear as bold instruments of EU policies for the externalization of migration control.

It is especially remarkable that the scope of the readmission obligation arising from the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement is much wider than that of the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016.

Within the broader context of EU-Turkey relations, it should be noted that the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement was coupled with a Roadmap on Visa Liberalization that offered the prospect of visa-free travel through EU borders for Turkish citizens. This can be perceived as an example of how the EU accepted the fact that it may need to grant certain concessions in return for obtaining Turkey's acceptance of a safe third country position and cooperation in its struggle with irregular migration in the aftermath of the Syrian crisis.

The vision of Turkey being a safe third country for Europe has been heavily criticized by human rights organizations.⁴⁶ They mainly base their position on the challenges related to refugee protection in Turkey. They especially claim that the general human rights situation in Turkey is problematic,

that the access to and content of international protection are insufficient, and that respect for the non-refoulement principle is lacking. By choosing to focus only on these criticisms, human rights organizations miss out on the real problem with the safe third country concept. Use of the safe third country concept is inherently problematic because it is a tool for deflection of responsibility for asylum seekers who should have actually found protection in the sending countries. Thus, even if the criticisms raised about Turkey are unfounded, third country transfers to Turkey are still bound to be criticized.

Implementation of these externalization instruments, namely the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016 and the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement, vis-à-vis Turkey showcases a typical example of how the implementation of the safe third country concept endangers refugee protection. The impact of these policies on Turkey is twofold: First, there is increasing pressure on Turkey to manage migration flows better, and second, we observe practices of norm diffusion from the EU to Turkey to ensure the legality of policies for externalization such as safe third country returns to Turkey. This dynamic is visible in the overlap in the processes of adoption of the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement and Turkey's Law on Foreigners and International Protection. The Readmission Agreement, an instrument of externalization, was signed on December 16, 2013⁴⁷ right after the enactment of Turkey's first law on migration and asylum, the Law on Foreigners and International Protection on April 11, 2013.⁴⁸ The one-year gap for entry into force of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection was intended as a period of preparation; the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement would enter into force around two and a half years after that. Before the adoption of this law, a legal framework on migration and asylum was almost non-existent in Turkey; there were no comprehensive regulations on procedures and legal remedies, which led to many violation decisions from the European Court of Human Rights. The field was managed through secondary legislation at lower levels that were largely closed to the public. Thus, it is possible to read the whole process of the adoption of instruments for externalization and domestic legislation as an effort to make Turkey into a safe third country.

It is known that during the drafting process of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, there was extensive technical and financial support from the EU and member states. As a result, the new normative framework is largely aligned with the EU framework. Also, a specialized administrative

agency, the Directorate General of Migration Management was founded. However, despite the demonstrated pressure from the EU for Turkey to become a safe third country, the current Turkish migration and asylum system put in place with the legislative reform in 2013 is very young and naturally is still in need of capacity enhancement, especially considering the diversity of the national actors involved such as administrative personnel, law enforcement, judges and lawyers. Thus, any assessment as to whether Turkey is a safe third country for asylum seekers in EU countries should be made against this background.

As a final addition to the account of the current state of affairs, the relevant decisions by the Greek courts and asylum committees as well as the Court of Justice of the European Union should be mentioned. In the course of enforcing the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016, upon appeals against decisions ordering return to Turkey, Greek asylum committees initially resisted such returns on the basis that Turkey is not a safe third country. However, upon second appeal, the courts overturned these decisions, effectively declaring Turkey a safe third country. Moreover, the Greek government then enacted legislation changing the composition of the asylum committees making them more government-oriented. After this change, the committees started to reject the appeals in line with Turkey's safe third country position in relation to Greece.⁴⁹ On the other hand, in the relevant cases before the Court of Justice of the EU,⁵⁰ again the legality of returns under the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016 was challenged. The Court, arguably due to political reasons, remained silent on the merits of the question on the basis that the Statement is not an act of the EU but rather of individual member states.⁵¹

Conclusion

Within the context of current political dynamics, the question of whether Turkey qualifies as a safe third country is not asked with a genuine interest in the protection of refugees, but rather unilaterally by EU states seeking to externalize migration control. The EU has presumed Turkey a "safe third country" regardless of whether Turkey fits all five of the criteria mentioned above. For instance, although Turkey does not grant

Within the context of current political dynamics, the question of whether Turkey qualifies as a safe third country is not asked with a genuine interest in the protection of refugees, but rather unilaterally by EU states seeking to externalize migration control.

“refugee status” to people coming from a non-European country due to the geographical limitation,⁵² and does not recognize for them the rights of refugees mentioned in the Convention in full, the presumption of Turkey as a “safe-third country” is mainly based on ensuring non-refoulement protection and access to fundamental rights.⁵³

Considering the recent decisions by Greek courts and asylum committees declaring Turkey a safe third country, and the Court of Justice of the European Union refraining from commenting on the issues raised by the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016, the EU seems determined to make full use of the safe third country concept with respect to Turkey. However, the Turkish government suspended the implementation of the bilateral Readmission Agreement with Greece in June 2018 and readmission arrangements with the EU in July 2019 for political reasons.⁵⁴ This creates uncertainties as to the application of the safe third country status to Turkey. Since the agreements are not terminated but merely suspended, according to the political climate, it is possible that the parties will decide to implement them again at any time, which would reanimate Turkey’s position as a safe third country.

Consequently, the protection challenges exacerbated by safe third country practices are best visible in the migration management dynamics between the EU, where resort to this concept is most advanced, and Turkey with the largest refugee population in the world and a young legal and institutional framework on migration and asylum. Considering the scale of the transit asylum and migration flows through Turkey, Turkey’s interpretation and attitude will continue to be crucial for the evolution of this concept of international law and its practices.

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ARTICLE

Continuity and Change: Comparing the Securitization of Migration under the Obama and Trump Administrations

Hugh HUTCHISON*

Abstract

One of the most contested issues in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election was immigration: in particular, irregular migration across the U.S. border with Mexico. This paper seeks to examine the extent to which the securitization of immigration is an “isolated phenomenon” endemic to the Trump Administration, as opposed to a reality of U.S. policymaking that has pervaded previous administrations. By contrasting the immigration platform of the current administration with that of its predecessor, led by Barack Obama, this paper will assert that, despite the intensification of rhetoric against irregular migrants, much of the Trump Administration’s response to immigration from the Southern border has been informed by, and is directly continuous with, actions taken by Obama between 2008 and 2016. It will argue that the same three factors: the post 9-11 conception of migration as an inherent threat, the deportation regime and the securitization (and sometimes militarization) of the southern border, have rendered the last decade of American immigration policy more or less consistent, despite vastly different stated ideological underpinnings.

Keywords

U.S. immigration policy, deportation regime, homeland security, U.S.-Mexico border, securitization of immigration.

* MA Student, Marmara University, Department of Political Science and International Relations, İstanbul, Turkey. E-mail: hughphutchison@gmail.com. ORCID: 0000-0003-0226-108X.

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Introduction

The U.S. is irrefutably a country of immigrants, the very birthplace of the idea of a “melting-pot society.” However, the relationship between new arrivals and the U.S. has not always been a harmonious one: xenophobia has been a defining and unfortunate aspect of the migrant experience—particularly for those who arrive and are unable to take advantage of established immigrant communities or diaspora networks. U.S. immigration policy has routinely fluctuated between relatively welcoming and unapologetically discriminatory approaches, particularly when it comes to the policing of migration from America’s southern neighbors. While in some ways, September 11 added a whole new security dimension to migration policymaking, it also evoked existing fears: the migrant as a “welfare-parasite,” a “violent criminal” or a “job thief.”

This intensification of scrutiny over immigration has characterized nearly two decades of U.S. policymaking and has been both a result of, and contributing factor in, the polarization of public opinion. The triumph of “threat based initiatives”—the Patriot Act, the Real ID Act and the Department of Homeland Affairs for example—over what O’Keefe calls “humane approaches” (like community based supervision programs) has come about as a result of a lack of political will for permissive policy solutions,¹ both within the electorate and at a governmental level.

Nineteen years after the emergence of this new security reality, the U.S. has an administration triumphantly extolling its “tough on migration” policy credentials while admonishing its predecessor for an apparently lax approach to border security. This begs the question: does the Trump administration’s aggressive border-security policy represent a substantial deviation from that of the Obama administration? While White House rhetoric against immigration has unquestionably intensified, is this indicative of a new conceptualization of migration security or rather a different expression of the same approach?

I will begin by broadly outlining the approaches to immigration taken by the Trump and Obama administrations, as well as their election commitments. I will then go on to argue that the same three elements have informed U.S. immigration policy from 2008 to the present day: the “realities” of post-9/11 national security, the deportation regime and the securitization of the Mexican border. I will also assert that while the tone of the “speech-act” around the securitization of migration has undergone a significant transformation to

better suit the current political climate, its character and purpose have not. The security priorities of the U.S. have, for the most part, remained consistent.

As a final note, I would like to acknowledge that the three elements identified above considerably predate both administrations. The intention of this paper is not to provide a historical background to Trump's immigration agenda, but rather to identify policy continuities between two administrations that have, at least superficially, vastly different public attitudes towards migration.

Trump 2016: Secure Borders, Bad Hombres

If one had to identify a single issue that dominated the 2016 U.S. Presidential elections, it would be immigration. Between talk of an “uncontrolled population flow of drug-dealing Latin Americans” and the border wall with Mexico, Donald Trump was able to effectively convince (predominantly white) voters that America was facing a serious crisis not only at its southern border, but also within. The two priorities of Trump's immigration policy were clear: deterrence, the restriction of both regular and irregular migration; and deportation, the identification and removal of the country's eleven million unauthorized migrants.²

If one had to identify a single issue that dominated the 2016 U.S. Presidential elections, it would be immigration.

Taking office in January 2017, the President elect wasted no time in pursuing his immigration agenda. Within the first month of his presidency, he introduced Executive Order 13769, commonly identified as the “Muslim Ban.” This sought to bar nationals from seven predominantly Muslim countries from entering the U.S. Following a challenge in the Supreme Court, the ban was repealed and revised, with a second travel ban (Executive Order 13780) also repealed upon review. A final, more limited travel ban was introduced and upheld in mid-2017.

To cite a recent example, the approach of the Trump Administration to the COVID-19 outbreak has been characteristically oriented around the minimization of perceived security threats from incoming arrivals. Citing “invisible enemies,”³ Trump declared (via executive-order) the immediate suspension of immigration to the U.S., with the wording of the order specifically referring to the threat posed to the American labor market.⁴ The administration's preoccupation with the apparent risk posed by migrants during the epidemic was reflected in an earlier decision, made in March, to

close the borders with Mexico and Canada (except for commercial traffic). Those who arrived at the border lacking the proper authorization to enter the U.S. (including asylum seekers) would no longer undergo processing, but would rather be immediately turned away.⁵

Trump's attempts at pursuing the most highly publicized aspect of his immigration policy—the border wall with Mexico—have been repeatedly frustrated by funding issues, precipitating the declaration of a national emergency (the first since September 11) and the diversion of public funds from the Department of Defense. Prior to this emergency declaration, the U.S. military was deployed to the border with Mexico (“Operation Faithful Patriot”) to intercept a wave of vulnerable would-be migrants from Central America. The Trump Presidency, like previous U.S. administrations, has detained migrants who attempt to enter the U.S. unlawfully. However, a much-criticized aspect of Trump's immigration reform has been the deterrence policy of family separation, incarcerating migrant parents and treating their children as unaccompanied minors. While this policy of zero-tolerance was officially reversed after considerable backlash, allegations of institutionalized family separations continue.

Critical to Trump's acceleration of deportations has been the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE). Created in 2003 in the aftermath of 9/11, ICE has been the most visible and controversial enforcement mechanism of Trump's immigration policy. ICE's work is described on the agency website as being: “critical to the enforcement of immigration law against those who present a danger to our national security (or) are a threat to public safety [...]”⁶ Under the Trump administration, Greene states that ICE's mandate has been expanded to include “[...] virtually all 11 million people estimated to be living in the U.S. without authorization.”⁷ This “elimination of enforcement priorities,”⁸ or the expansion of what constitutes “a danger to national security,” has been complimented with a massive increase in personnel and funding: Greene cites a twofold expansion of the organization since Trump took office.⁹ ICE has also, along with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), been embroiled in scandals surrounding the aforementioned family separations, along with allegations of sexual assault of detainees and multiple erroneous deportations of U.S. citizens. ICE has repeatedly operated outside of its jurisdiction, including in “sanctuary cities” where local authorities have introduced legislation specifically disallowing deportations. Even Catholic churches frequented by irregular migrants of a

predominantly Mexican, Central and Southern American background have been targeted, in spite of first amendment protections.¹⁰

The Obama Administration: Hope, the Status Quo

In the context of the upcoming 2020 Presidential elections, and the promise of a return to “normality” after the unexpected ascension of Trump and far-right populist politics in the U.S., the present administration has drawn many comparisons to that of its predecessor, the Obama-led Democrats. While many have focused on superficial and abstract notions of “presidential-ness,” the Trump administration’s promotion of a crack-down on immigration and border security as front-and-center policy concerns has led to increased scrutiny of the Obama Presidency’s record on immigration.

The election of Barack Obama was heralded as a seminal moment in American politics and race relations. Despite his campaign being centered on hope, his administration was quickly bogged down by the worst economic recession since the Great Depression and a number of foreign policy concerns. The loss of the House of Representatives in the 2010 mid-term elections stunted his capacity to legislate through Congress. As a result, he was unable to pass a single item of significant migration legislation during his presidency.

Obama was a keen proponent of the DREAM act (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors), a non-partisan piece of legislation first introduced to the U.S. senate in 2001. Although it has undergone a number of changes since its initial conception, the core of the legislation is the creation of a process by which irregular migrants that arrived as minors may apply for residency and citizenship. The Obama administration sought to reintroduce the bill a number of times between 2009 and 2012, however they were unable to pass it through the hostile Congress. Unable to enact meaningful immigration reform in the legislature, Obama, through an executive order in 2012, introduced DACA (Deferred Action for Children Arrivals). This

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policy allowed irregular migrants who arrived in the U.S. as children to avoid deportation and be eligible for a work permit. In 2014, he sought to expand this program to include the parents of lawful residents of the U.S. through DAPA (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans). However, this was challenged in the Supreme Court, which failed to make a ruling, before it was eventually rescinded by the Trump administration. DACA was also repealed.

Despite these efforts, Obama's attempts at positive immigration reforms are marred by his legacy as "deporter in chief." Describing the significant increase in deportations compared to the two previous administrations, Hing writes:

During his eight years in office, his administration formally removed more than three million noncitizens, compared to two million during George W. Bush's tenure and about 900,000 under the Bill Clinton administration... At the time he left office, Obama was definitely the reigning deportation champion.¹¹

Hing attributes the steep rise in deportation figures to changing enforcement priorities: namely the formal removal of criminals and those who crossed the border unlawfully.¹² However the increase in deportations under the Obama administration dwarfs not only the figures associated with his predecessors Bush and Clinton, but also those of Trump. At its peak, the Obama administration deported 409,849 immigrants in 2012, while Trump's record, despite his rhetoric, amounts to little over half of that figure, with his administration managing to remove 256,085 deportees in 2018.¹³

Securitization, 9/11 and the Enforcement Consensus

According to the Copenhagen School, securitization consists of two inseparable parts. The first is the "speech act:" an assertion made by a public official that particular problems, real or perceived, represent an existential threat to the state and its common values. In order to be "securitized," the issue in question cannot be resolvable through ordinary means. Securitization is not a natural process; rather, "by saying 'security' a state representative moves that particular case into a specific area; claiming a special right to use the means necessary to block this development."¹⁴ What constitutes a securitizable issue varies from society to society according to its priorities and immediate concerns: Buzan notes, for example, that "some will securitize culture (the former USSR, Iran), and some will not (the UK, the Netherlands)."¹⁵

The second component of securitization is the response: if the threat in question is deemed significant enough for extraordinary measures to be legitimized, what public policy decisions are undertaken in order to resolve it? These might include the granting of extra-judicial authority to certain actors, the suspension of ordinary legislative proceedings, or actions that “violate the constitution, disregard international human rights norms, or even go against common sense.”¹⁶ Securitization can be described as a performative process: it demands that the securitizing actor (generally a government entity, but potentially also lobbyists, bureaucrats or union groups) is able to adequately elevate a particular issue—“either as a special kind of politics or as above politics”¹⁷—in the eyes of its audience. Without the acceptance of the audience (the voting public or the controlling elite), the presentation of a particular issue as being of existential importance is not securitization, but rather a “securitizing move.”¹⁸

The securitization of migration is widely regarded as a relatively new phenomenon, associated with the conceptual broadening of security beyond a restrictive, militaristic understanding. Huysmans describes how the coalescence of migration and security concerns developed alongside the processes of Europeanisation. He goes on to identify European border policies such as the Schengen Agreement and Dublin Convention as connecting “... immigration and asylum with terrorism, transnational crime and border control.”¹⁹ European institutional developments in transnational migration and intercontinental freedom of movement were informed by a problematized view of immigration: be it born out of concern over labor markets or the fear, pervasive in conservative discourse, of multiculturalism as precipitating “societal disintegration.”²⁰

In an American context, immigration security rose to prominence alongside the concept of “homeland security” in the aftermath of 9/11: an umbrella approach to the combatting of a wide variety of threats to the U.S. and the way of life of its citizens. As the perpetrators of 9/11 were “foreign nationals who had entered the country through legal travel channels,”²¹ immigration to the U.S. shifted from a largely economic issue to

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one of national security. In order to justify significant and immediate changes to visa controls, law enforcement and information collection (to name but a few areas of reform) the U.S. government deliberately drew lines of affiliation between international migration and terrorism. The September 11 attacks were the precipitating event used to justify an exceptional new attitude and approach to immigration.

This is not to say, however, that migration was an uncontested political space prior to 2001. Boswell identifies the three most common ways in which migration was negatively framed pre-9/11: existing border control as being ineffectual in preventing “hordes” of irregular migrants, the belief that migrants undercut the existing labor market and exploit welfare systems, and finally the criminal element: the international smuggling of people, arms and narcotics.²² What is most apparent about contemporary U.S. migration discourse is that concerns about the link between migration and terrorism did not eclipse these perceptions. Instead, two changes occurred simultaneously: international terror became another element of the migration agenda, and the three existing “threats” became matters of national security by virtue of the broader securitization of migration.

These four issues have informed political attitudes toward migration since 2001 on both sides of politics. 9/11 effectively curtailed any prospect of comprehensive immigration reform, and sunk an existing proposal by President Bush in 2000 promising better regional integration with Mexico. This would have included an armistice on deportations and a huge expansion of the U.S. temporary worker programs.²³ Migration, be it from the Middle East or from the southern border, now represented a perceived threat, and enforcement became normalized as the default policy toward immigration.

One discernable difference between the Trump and Obama administrations is that, while both have actively increased the enforcement of immigration, the latter also promoted legislation that would have allowed for limited legalization of irregular migrants. In addition to the aforementioned DREAM act and the introduction of DACA via executive order, comprehensive immigration reform was floated a number of times between 2008 and 2016. For example, a paper released by the White House in 2011 argues for both greater enforcement and legalization. This document argues for four different reforms: the heightening of security measures on the Mexican border, legal sanctions against businesses that exploit undocumented workers, legal certification for seasonal agricultural workers and a pathway to legal status and eventual citizenship for irregular migrants.²⁴

These proposed reforms cover a spectrum of policy responses to migration: enforcement, legalization and the disruption of institutional factors that motivate irregular migration. However, as noted by Rosenblum, “the American political system is strongly biased against comprehensive legislation of any kind.”²⁵ The short-term political considerations of the Obama administration, particularly after the results of the 2010 mid-term congressional elections, disrupted any serious attempts at reform. There were two immediate problems: the Democrats no longer commanded a working majority in the House of Representatives, and enforcement is considered to be the only politically popular migration policy amongst a majority of voters. Undocumented migrants are considered to be quantifiable manifestations of policy failure, while enforcement represents a concrete (albeit temporary) solution: “...every person detained and deported is one fewer unauthorized immigrant in the United States.”²⁶ As such, the only politically viable options for the Obama administration were those that adhered to the enforcement consensus.

With the repeal of DACA, Obama’s only lasting legacy on immigration was the expansion of enforcement mechanisms, a far cry from the sweeping and progressive reforms he promised to enact within his first year in office. Ultimately the Obama administration was constrained not just by political circumstance, but also by the way in which the post-9/11 attitude toward immigration has framed unauthorized entry into the U.S. as a crisis of security. Obama was, as Trump is now, beholden to an electorate whose views on migration are largely informed by the four perceptions we discussed earlier: that migration is linked to terrorism, uncontrolled population flows, worsening economic conditions and international crime. Trump has embraced this characterization of migration to the U.S., while Obama, despite arguing for progressive reform, quietly acceded to it.

The Deportation Regime under Obama and Trump

It has already been noted that Obama oversaw more deportations than any other U.S. president in history, and that Trump’s massive expansion of ICE has not resulted in a numerical increase in arrests and deportations. This warrants examination in closer detail, not least given Obama’s reputation as a (would-be) progressive reformer and Trump’s as an anti-immigration nativist.

Deportation represents the sum total of two different actions: removal and return. Removal refers to a formal court-ordered ejection of an unauthorized migrant from the U.S., generally with an associated timeframe in which

the prosecuted person may not re-enter America. Return on the other hand, sometimes known as a “voluntary departure,” involves the immediate repatriation of irregular migrants without a term of incarceration or other legal sanction.²⁷

The deportations conducted by the Obama and Trump administrations have predominantly consisted of removals, while Clinton and Bush’s were overwhelmingly weighted in favor of returns. To illustrate this point, in the

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last year of his presidency, Obama oversaw the removal of 333,593 irregular migrants compared with just 106,473 returns. The following year, Trump removed a similar ratio of 245,364 people and returned 100,754 others. In comparison, George W. Bush in

2008 removed 359,795 people, while returning 811,263. In 2000, Clinton removed 188,467 migrants, while 1,675,876 were returned.²⁸

A convenient way to conceptualize the difference between “removal” and “return” is to consider the latter to be an informal ejection from the U.S., while the former is fully institutionalized, and frequently involves incarceration or other forms of legal sanction. Two factors can be said to have altered the balance of returns vis-à-vis removals. The first is the emergence of ICE as a removal-oriented law enforcement entity, and the second is a major decline in illegal border crossings.²⁹

It can be argued that the emphasis on “formal” deportation is one of the most apparent continuities between the Obama and Trump immigration policies. Starting in 2011, the Obama administration began to refer to record levels of enforcement, explicitly synonymizing removal with deportation.³⁰ While ICE was founded by Bush, it was Obama’s expansion of the “Secure Communities” deportation program that allowed the law enforcement agency to proactively remove unprecedented numbers of undocumented migrants. Secure Communities, which was discontinued by Obama in 2014 and reinstated by Trump in 2017, was part of a targeted effort to deport irregular migrants living in the U.S. on the basis of their criminal record.

Described by Kalhan as “the largest expansion of state and local immigration policing in U.S. history”³¹ the Secure Communities program combines local

law enforcement databases with those of ICE, meaning that any person brought into custody can have their residency status automatically checked. The automation of immigration policing is a primary factor behind the record number of removals under Obama. It is also an indication of the extent to which the belief in immigrant criminality as informing migration policy has been largely bi-partisan.³² One often cited difference between the deportation regimes of Obama and Trump has been that the former prioritized the expulsion of irregular migrants with criminal records, while the latter expanded ICE's mandate to include the U.S.' entire undocumented community. However, as Velez notes, a majority of those deported through the Secure Communities program have committed either low-level offences or had no criminal record. She describes how Secure Communities has allowed "...police officers to pull over those who look Hispanic to ask them for their IDs, and then get them deported for merely driving without a license."³³

The scope of deportations has widened significantly under the Trump administration, corresponding with the expansion of ICE as an immigration enforcement agency. Free from their enforcement priorities under the Obama administration, arrests by ICE increased by 42 percent in the first eight months of the Trump presidency.³⁴ Trump has, in spite of declining deportation figures, overseen an unprecedented expansion of ICE and its operational capacity when compared to other law enforcement bodies. He has also sought, through a now rescinded executive order, to target "sanctuary cities" that refuse to co-operate with ICE, limiting their access to federal funding. The Trump administration has clearly, both through its rhetoric and policing, expanded the scope of migrant criminality to include the entire non-documented population of the U.S.

However, there are clear continuities between the deportation regimes of the Obama and Trump administrations. The first, already discussed, is the prioritization of removal rather than return. The involvement of formal law enforcement and judicial proceedings effectively criminalizes re-entry to the U.S. and disincentivizes repeated border crossings. The second is the reintroduction of the Secure Communities program by Trump in 2017, although to considerably less effect. Finally, there is the association of migration with criminality, or rather the belief that migrants are more likely to perpetrate criminal acts than their naturalized counterparts. As has been identified earlier in this paper, the "criminal element" apparently inherent within migration has become a matter of national security. While Obama may have, in proposing

comprehensive immigration reform, stressed the virtues of immigration in keeping the U.S. “youthful, dynamic and entrepreneurial,”³⁵ his policies perpetuated the notion that migrants, particularly those arriving from the Mexican border, constituted a potential threat to U.S. communities.³⁶ It can be argued that Trump, a figure unapologetically opposed to immigration, has done little more than apply nativist rhetoric to an immigration policy framework that was already oriented around deportation.

The Southern Border as a Security Issue: Obama and Trump

In 2006, then-Senator Barack Obama, along with a number of high-profile Democrats including Hillary Clinton and Chuck Schumer, voted in favor of a Republican initiative to approve seven hundred miles of fencing along the Mexican border.³⁷ Spokespeople for Donald Trump have identified this as a tacit recognition on the part of Democrats of the need for a border wall with Mexico. However, Obama’s role in the securitization of the southern border extends beyond this relatively innocuous vote prior to his assuming the presidency.

As has already been noted, illegal border crossings under the Obama (and Trump) administrations have declined dramatically. In 2006, 851,000 people crossed the border, while in 2016, around 62,000 people made the same journey. 2011 and 2017, the lowest years in recent record, saw this number fall well below 50,000.³⁸ In spite of these figures, however, both presidents have faced a “crisis at the southern border.” Between 2013 and 2014, there was a surge in unaccompanied minors arriving at the U.S. border, predominantly arriving from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. In 2018, migrants from these same countries arrived at the U.S. border in “caravans.”

These arrivals in particular are complicated by virtue of their being part of the “complex migration phenomenon” of mixed migration, wherein no monolithic understanding of population movement can adequately account for the plethora of possible individual motivations for migration.³⁹ While the prevailing assumption is that migrants arriving in the U.S. via the southern border are predominantly motivated by economic considerations (the “pull” factors, particularly the prospect of gainful employment),⁴⁰ this fails to take into account that many migrants are driven by the “push” factors of violence, economic or physical insecurity or personal desperation. To illustrate this point, Obinna and Field cite an estimated poverty rate of sixty percent in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, while also noting that political instability and

high rates of gender-based violence are often motivating factors in the decision to migrate.⁴¹ In the case of large mixed migration movements—“surges,” as they were often called in 2013 and 2018—a nuanced understanding of these diverse motivations is often lost or ignored in favor of a simpler narrative.

The arrival of the migrant caravans from the Northern Triangle of Central America coincided with the 2018 mid-term elections in the U.S. Trump actively politicized the issue and used it to push his own anti-immigration credentials, telling voters in November: “if you don’t want America to be overrun by masses of illegal aliens and giant caravans, you’d better vote Republican.”⁴² Trump deployed five thousand U.S. military personnel and two thousand members of the National Guard to intercept the caravan, detain migrants who crossed the border and deter further crossings. Although the zero-tolerance policy of family separation had officially ended, it is believed that a large number of separations continued at the border. In effect, a potential humanitarian crisis was co-opted in service of the further militarization of the border with Mexico.⁴³

There was a precedent for this, however. While the reaction of the Obama administration was largely more humanitarian, two direct lines of continuity can be drawn between the responses of the Trump and Obama administrations to their respective “crises.” Jeh Johnson, then U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security, “emphasized the need for marked increases in detention and deportation in order to send a “message” to deter future migration.”⁴⁴ Many of the children and families arriving at the U.S. border had been led to believe, generally by their smugglers, that they would be granted asylum in the U.S. Instead, the Obama administration requested four billion dollars in emergency funding to expand the capacity of immigration courts and ICE detention facilities. Although Congress did not approve the release of these funds, ICE border detention facilities still underwent significant capacity upgrades, including the conversion of male adult prisons into detention facilities for women and children.⁴⁵

These same border detention facilities, described as “modular barracks among open yards that torrential rains have turned into mud flats,”⁴⁶ continue to be used by the Trump administration, and have been subject to significant criticism. While the principle of “family detention as deterrence” has been expanded under Trump, it has its origins in 2014. Quoting Johnson again: “Our message is clear to those who try to illegally cross our borders: You will be sent back home.”⁴⁷

There is also a precedent for the deployment of military personnel to the Mexican Border, although in a much more limited capacity. Operation Phalanx, carried out between 2010 and 2016, distributed 1,200 members of the National Guard along the southern border. These troops were responsible for the removal or return of undocumented migrants and the disruption of cross-border narcotics smuggling.⁴⁸ While the scale of Trump's deployment was much more significant, it is worth noting that the militarization of the southern border was also trialed under Obama.

Conclusion

It is inarguable that the Trump administration has, in both its rhetoric and its expansion of enforcement mechanisms, pursued a considerably more aggressive policy toward tackling irregular migration when compared with its predecessor. It is impossible to divorce, for example, the deliberate separation of immigrant children from their families, from the administration's stated desire to deter the arrival of undocumented migrants to the U.S. The expansion of ICE and the CBP are ideological in nature: Trump campaigned, and was elected on, the belief that the U.S. was experiencing a migration crisis that threatened national security.

However, the Obama administration can be said to have legislated within the same parameters. While its intentions may have been different, as evidenced by repeated attempts at meaningful reform (institutional change and pathways to legalization), immigration policy within the U.S. has been effectively homogenized in the aftermath of 9/11. The American electorate has, for the time being, resoundingly rejected the idea of a comprehensive overhaul of immigration in favor of the concrete, quantifiable and short-term solution of enforcement.

In recognizing this political reality, the Obama administration established a number of precedents. The first, and most critical, was a wide-reaching system of deportation focused on the formal removal of irregular migrants to the U.S., informed by a tenuous connection between migration and criminality. The second precedent was the escalation of security at the Mexican border, including the deployment of the National Guard as a deterrent to a surge of migrants attempting to cross into the U.S. This escalation also included the detention of families in border facilities, a fact acknowledged by Trump in his defense of his own policy of zero-tolerance family separation.

Although it is disingenuous to present Trump's controversial immigration policy as a direct continuation of that of his predecessor, we can instead see the securitization of immigration under Obama as a framework on which the current president has been able to expand. While Trump's rhetoric around immigration is one of open hostility, it can be argued that it is little more than a radicalized expression of a belief that existed in previous administrations: namely, that migration is a potential threat to security, one that allows for the arrival of criminals and terrorists, undermines local labor forces and, if left unchecked, will result in an endless wave of undesirable and vulnerable people with whom the U.S. is ill-equipped to deal.

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ARTICLE

Media Portrayals of Refugees and their Effects on Social Conflict and Social Cohesion

Müzeyyen PANDIR*

Abstract

Media portrayals of refugees can produce prejudice toward refugees as well as understanding and acceptance. In that sense, the media have the potential to be part of the problem or part of the solution in issues of conflict and cohesion between host and refugee communities. In this critical time when the future of Syrian refugees in Turkey is being discussed, this article reviews previous research on the media's representation of refugees, identifies the dominant representational practices and discusses their effects on the inclusion and exclusion of refugees, which may lead to social cohesion or social conflict, respectively. The main body of the article first identifies the negative effects of refugee representations, namely victimization, depoliticization, dehumanization, marginalization, homogenization and de-individualization, and explains in what ways these representations stigmatize refugees as "other" in society and produce prejudice and xenophobia toward them. The article then turns to the representation strategies used to reduce prejudice and motivate understanding in society. Here, empathizing with refugees and taking a rights-based journalism approach are identified among the media's inclusion practices toward refugees. Overall, specifically focusing on Syrians in Turkey, the paper aims to initiate a discussion on how the media can play a role in assisting the acceptance of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants in a new country by raising awareness about the media's representational practices.

* Assistant Professor, Işık University, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, İstanbul, Turkey. E-mail: muzeyyen.pandir@isikun.edu.tr. ORCID: 0000-0003-1590-4689.

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Introduction

Since the start of the war in Syria in 2011, more than 3.5 million Syrians have sought refuge in Turkey, making Turkey the country hosting the highest number of refugees worldwide.¹ Questions about the future of such a big refugee/asylum seeker/migrant population in the country raise social, political and demographic concerns for the Turkish government.² Currently, the future of Syrians in Turkey is being discussed around the topics of voluntary refoulement, non-refoulement, integration and citizenship.³ However, perhaps the most urgent topic concerns the building of understanding and cohesion between Syrians and Turkish citizens living together in cities, since it is unknown what ratio of the Syrian population will return to Syria or remain in Turkey.

Article 96 of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection assigns the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) as the official body responsible for cohesion in Turkey.⁴ On its website, the DGMM cites the types of cohesion activities it organizes to equip Syrians with the knowledge and skills necessary for their adaptation to different aspects of social life.⁵ The effectiveness of these activities requires critical assessment; however, what concerns this study is how the Turkish community is prepared to accept living with Syrians, which is also an important question, since any successful cohesion process requires public support and acceptance. In addition to government institutions, the media plays a key role in facilitating public acceptance.

Media representations steer public opinion, attitudes and feelings toward refugees directly and indirectly, in positive or negative ways, intentionally

Media practices can motivate empathy, acceptance and peace between groups when they intend to promote a culture of co-existence and mutual understanding in their portrayals of minority and vulnerable groups. That is to say, the media is both part of the problem and the solution, for media representations can produce effects toward the inclusion or exclusion of refugees.

or unintentionally. The use of hate speech or misinformation in the news can directly influence people's behaviors, start violence between groups and lead to social conflicts; it can also produce indirect effects by damaging the quality of social interactions

between people.⁶ On the other hand, media practices can motivate empathy, acceptance and peace between groups when they intend to promote a culture of co-existence and mutual understanding in their portrayals of minority and vulnerable groups. That is to say, the media is both part of the problem and the solution, for media representations can produce effects toward the inclusion or exclusion of refugees.

The starting point of this article is the question of how the media plays a role in both facilitating and hindering social inclusion and cohesion, by producing positive and negative portrayals of refugees that influence everyday practices and interactions. The study aims to answer this question through a review of existing research on media representations of refugees in general, and Syrians in Turkey in particular. The study identifies the dominant representational practices in refugee/Syrian portrayals, discusses their various effects on refugee identity, and then considers their implications for the acceptance or exclusion of refugees in the host society.

The study does not make a suggestion about the best solutions for the future of Syrians in Turkey and elsewhere; rather, it suggests that during the time that Syrians stay in Turkey, maintaining good relationships between Syrian and Turkish communities is crucial for social peace. In that context, the study aims to make a contribution to understanding the role of media representations in processes leading to the social exclusion or inclusion of refugees. The main research questions guiding the study are:

1. What are the common forms of representing refugees in the media?
2. What are the effects of these representations in producing a) prejudice and xenophobia, and b) acceptance and empathy toward refugees?
3. What are the effects of these representations on issues of social conflict and social cohesion?

The following section presents background information about the discourses and public opinions about Syrian refugees in Turkey. The main body of the paper first discusses how media portrayals produce effects of exclusion and conflict. Then it discusses the media's more inclusive practices toward refugees and how they motivate social inclusion and cohesion.

Discourses and Public Perceptions about Syrians in Turkey

When the war started in Syria in 2011, the Turkish government opened its borders to Syrians fleeing war and welcomed them in the country as “our guests” and “brothers,” expecting that the war would be over soon and their

stay in Turkey would be for a limited period of time. The Turkish government's official discourses about guests and brothers were also reflected in the media, and a majority of the media portrayed Syrians as victims of war who need urgent humanitarian help.⁷ Particularly between the years 2011 and 2015, a sympathetic perspective dominated the official and public discussions, while negative portrayals appeared less frequently.⁸ However, as the war conditions continued and the Syrians' return was delayed, their population in Turkey grew and their presence in urban spaces increased. Particularly since 2015, the public perception of Syrians as guests and their feelings of compassion toward them have started to be replaced by a growing sentiment that Syrians are overstaying their welcome.⁹

Recent studies reveal that Turkish public opinion toward Syrians has grown to be more negative.¹⁰ Having conducted interviews with Turkish citizens, Saraçoğlu and Bélanger propose that Turkish citizens' negative opinions are related to a perceived loss, which is expressed as the loss of economic gains, of national cohesion, and of urban space.¹¹ The perceived loss of economic gains is manifested through accusations that economic resources are flowing to Syrians, or through concerns over competition for employment, or through misinformation such that Syrians receive a monthly salary from the government. Anxiety about the loss of national cohesion appears as perceiving Syrians as foreign threats to national unity and is manifested in groundless opinions such that Syrians have made the country an unsafe place or through debates against the possibility of granting citizenship to Syrians.¹² Similarly, anxiety about the loss of urban space to Syrians is about perceiving the expansion of Arabic culture in cities as a cultural threat to Turkish urban life and values. It may be manifested through criticisms about the visibility of Arabic signs on restaurants and cafes, or through the social media lynching of all Syrians on the basis of imprecise crime news, or through hostile attitudes toward Syrians for using public spaces. At times, the media had also taken part in triggering feelings of hatred regarding Syrians' visibility in public spaces by making critical news about Turkish beaches being "filled" with Syrians, which supposedly makes "Turks feel like foreigners,"¹³ or by producing fake news portraying Syrians smoking shishas and having a good time on beaches.¹⁴ The emphasis on Syrians enjoying public spaces connotes the idea that they are not genuine refugees in need of help but are instead taking advantage of Turkish resources.

These perceptions of threats are not specific to Syrian refugees in Turkey. Refugees and immigrants are exposed to the same kinds of accusations all around the world.¹⁵ Although many of these stereotypical perceptions are

based on misinformation, myth and sometimes scapegoating, it is vital to calm down citizens' anxieties about the presence of foreigners in their country and prepare them for living together, which is an essential condition for social peace in any migration-receiving society.

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Cohesion or integration activities generally target immigrants and refugees (rather than citizens) as homogenous groups (rather than individuals with different needs and aspirations) and aim to incorporate them into the economic, cultural and social life of the receiving country by providing them with housing, health services, education and work opportunities.¹⁶ However, their successful cohesion does not guarantee their acceptance, because local communities' emotions toward foreigners can be mixed and the provision of services to them can affect local people's perceptions of them positively or negatively, which holds true for Syrians in Turkey too. For example, if refugees/Syrians do not work and participate in the labor market, they are perceived as an economic burden; whereas when they actively work they are accused of seizing work opportunities of local workers.¹⁷ Murat Erdoğan reveals Turkish people's mixed and inconsistent opinions about Syrians in a public survey conducted with a sample of 1,501 people.¹⁸ In the survey, 70 percent of those surveyed stated that they see Syrians as a burden for the Turkish economy; 60 percent of them criticize the cost of support given to them when there are poor Turkish citizens; and almost half of them (47.4%) are against the idea that Syrians should be given work permits, which is surprising because this option can actually ease the perceived burden on the economy.

Other studies report that when refugees' conditions are visibly improved as a result of successful policies and individual initiatives, another concern is raised among the public about the genuineness of refugees, because "real" refugees are *expected* to look suffering.¹⁹ Since refugees are aware that the humanitarian aid they receive is justified on the basis of the perception that they are in desperate need, this perception also informs the role they play "to gain the approval of the helpers and to be successful in obtaining aid," as Barbara Harrell-Bond explains.²⁰ In other words, the view that refugees should stop receiving aid when their conditions are improved leaves refugees in a vulnerable position in which they fear not to be welcomed by the host community anymore.

These arguments suggest that a successful cohesion process is possible not only through preparing newcomers, but also through preparing the local people to voluntarily accept living with newcomers.²¹ In this respect, it is important to understand local people, how their perceptions of refugees and of threats are constructed, and to consider ways to counter negative opinions and attitudes toward refugees in society. Governments work with a variety of social institutions in this process, the media being one of them.

The media are the main machinery for the promotion of social conflict and social cohesion.²² Media offer a platform for the production, circulation and interpretation of meaning concerning groups of people and events. The content of these meanings may spread understanding or hatred among groups. When the subject matter involves ethnic issues or minorities, media discourses may arguably be easily formed around polarization between “us” and “them” and promote conflict rather than cohesion.²³ Obviously, media have complicated effects on conflict and cohesion and these may not be direct effects, and they may produce different results for different groups at different times. Nevertheless, drawing on the findings of existing research on the representations of immigrants and refugees in general as well as the portrayals of Syrians in the Turkish media in particular, it is possible to talk about dominant representational practices used by the media and discuss their possible effects on the construction and perception of refugee identities. In the following section, first, the effects of media portrayals toward exclusion and social conflict, then the effects of media portrayals toward inclusion and social cohesion are discussed.

Portrayals of Refugees Steering Exclusion and Social Conflict

The dominant and stereotypical representations of refugees affect the increase of prejudice and negative attitudes toward them, facilitating processes of social exclusion and conflict in society.

The dominant and stereotypical representations of refugees affect the increase of prejudice and negative attitudes toward them, facilitating processes of social exclusion and conflict in society. The effects that facilitate exclusion are identified

as victimization, depoliticization, dehumanization, marginalization, homogenization and de-individualization of refugees.

Victimization of Refugees

One common argument that emerges in many studies on the representation of refugees is that refugees are represented as victims.²⁴ Studies on the

representation of Syrians in the Turkish media support this argument through findings that Syrians appear predominantly in news constructed around the discourse of victimhood; they are represented as “suffering,” “poor people” and “in need of help.”²⁵ Victimhood is a stereotypical characteristic of being a refugee, which is repeated in different national contexts to represent displaced people from different ethnicities and nationalities.

Thinking about the effects of presenting refugees as victims, the most immediate effect seems to be positive. When refugees are represented and perceived as helpless, suffering people in need of charity, these representations raise a sense of responsibility and justify institutions’ humanitarian actions toward them, while making it easier to raise public support for inclusive policies targeting them.²⁶ However, a drawback is that if support for refugees is legitimized on the basis of their need for charity only (not on the basis of international refugee rights), then they are no longer perceived as refugees when their conditions are relatively improved and they are expected to return to their countries, as mentioned above.²⁷ For this reason, the victim perception does not serve to bring about permanent social acceptance and cohesion on its own.

Perceiving refugees solely as victims causes other problems for refugees too. Although victimhood is a major part of the refugee experience, it is not the only one; refugee experiences are too complicated and diverse to be reduced to one. Refugees are indeed people who have survived war or conflicts and who are in the middle of starting new lives in a new country. Many of them get involved in the economy as entrepreneurs or workers; refugee children attend schools even if it may be economically challenging for their families; and women, even if they mostly stay at home, remain in the center of building a new life for their families in a new society.²⁸ All of these roles involve real actions. However, the dominance of their representation as victims hides and erases these actions and achievements from the public imagination and reduces them to the image of the “helpless, incapable and incompetent” refugee. In these ways, the discourse of victimization constructs refugees as dependent subjects, denying their agency.

Another result of victimization is that when refugees are perceived as incapable of making decisions, their opinions about matters are seen irrelevant and thus they are not consulted. As a result, in the news, other people (bureaucrats, public administrators, politicians, etc.) speak and make decisions for them even when the subject matter directly concerns refugee conditions and experiences.²⁹ It is in these ways that victimization first produces the image of voiceless and silent refugees, then excludes refugees from decision-making processes.

Depoliticization of Refugees

A further implication of victimization is that it depoliticizes the refugee issue. Refugees are political subjects with political rights, whose situation requires rights-based political decisions and actions. But when the media predominantly discuss the refugee issue around the discourse of victimhood, which is an emotional approach to the problem, political discussions seeking political solutions to the problem are not allocated a fair amount of space and eventually they are excluded from public debates. This is an example of depoliticization by the media. To put it simply, when refugee issues are not approached as political problems and not discussed around the rights of refugees and the responsibilities of (inter)national actors, then they are depoliticized.

In the same way, the refugee issue is depoliticized when there is no contextual reporting on the subject. Contextual reporting of refugees refers to understanding and reporting on the backgrounds of the groups of refugees, which involves understanding the reasons behind the wars and crises in refugees' countries and the processes behind refugee mobility. Such reporting on refugees is different from reporting their victimhood from an emotional perspective, as it places the issue back in the arena of politics, provides an understanding of the problem and discusses ways of improving refugees' lives while focusing on their rights as refugees.³⁰

The media report of IGAM (the Research Center on Asylum and Migration), for example, surveys the news published about Syrian refugees in the Turkish media between June 2017 and November 2018 and reveals the lack of information and discussions about refugee rights.³¹ The study finds that although the media widely report the difficult living conditions of Syrian refugees, they rarely mention refugee rights concerning housing, health, education, work and social benefits. Even in the news in which refugees are openly marked as victims, the claims of rights that could solve their victimhood are mentioned in only 15 percent of them. In addition, the opinions of NGOs working with refugees and for refugee rights are not represented in the news.

The reasons behind depoliticization may be different in different contexts. It can be speculated that depoliticization in the news is used as a strategy to release the responsible actors from their responsibilities. For example, political actors may prefer to talk about the refugee issue not within the frame of their "responsibilities" toward refugees, but within the frame of "humanitarian aid," which positions themselves (or the nation) as *benevolent* people helping people in need.³² Secondly, the lack of a political context in the news may be because

journalists are not trained to cover the issue. This was obvious particularly in the beginning of the refugee crisis when untrained journalists failed to pick up the correct terms among “refugees,” “asylum seekers,” “migrants” and “illegal migrants” and they used these terms interchangeably to refer to Syrians fleeing the war.³³ Not using the correct terminology fails to position the discussion in the correct political context. Conversely, using the correct terms, such as asylum seekers or refugees, justifies why these people had to leave their countries, indicates that their problems are linked to political factors that are out of their control, and brings the topic of their rights as asylum seekers or refugees into the debates.

Dehumanization of Refugees

Another recurring argument among the research on the representation of refugees is that as much as they are victimized, refugees are portrayed as threats and risks to the members of host societies. Various studies analyzing different national media arrive at the conclusion that immigrants and refugees are portrayed as threats through claims that 1) they are illegals,³⁴ criminals and terrorists, 2) they are invading and flooding the country, 3) they carry diseases and 4) they are not genuine refugees but are trying to take advantage of the host country’s refugee policies.³⁵ Studies on the Turkish media make similar points; they argue that alongside portrayals of refugees as victims, Syrians are portrayed as “threats” around the topics of illegality, human trafficking, crime, security and economic risks.³⁶

The perception of threat is a key element in shaping attitudes toward refugees. Not only does it lead to discrimination against and exclusion of the group, it facilitates the dehumanization of refugees. Dehumanization is the “denial of the humanity” of a group.³⁷ It is a process in which groups are perceived as lacking human attributes, even as not having achieved much progress from their animal origins, thus lacking emotions, intelligence, morality and civility. This is actually a racist perception as it removes the group from the human race. Dehumanization may also occur in more complex ways, in which others’ abilities to experience complex human emotions are denied. Here, primary emotions such as fear and pleasure are attributed to everyone, while complex emotions such as hope and remorse are attributed to members of the in-group only.³⁸

Dehumanization of refugees occurs when they are defined not as people fleeing war zones but as masses, floods, invaders or carriers of diseases. It also occurs when refugees are discussed as numbers. In a more latent manner, dehumanization occurs in debates in which it is accepted that

refugees are people in need of protection, but the cost of support given to them is problematized through the argument that there are poor local people who deserve that support more than refugees, which was a criticism raised by Turkish respondents in a survey.³⁹ This perception suggests that refugees are not equal with “us;” thus they are less worthy of some level of standards.

The above examples demonstrate that dehumanization produces real effects for refugees in terms of how they are perceived and treated. Some of these effects may even place the lives of refugees at risk. When a group is perceived or described as lacking human sensibility, “they are seen as falling outside of the realm of our moral obligations” and mistreatment of the group and antisocial behaviors toward them may become justified.⁴⁰ These behaviors may be legitimized through claims that our society, particularly “our kids and women” should be protected from these threats. It may even be claimed that the group deserves their negative conditions.

Trying to understand the social and psychological reasons behind dehumanization, Esses et al. suggest that some individuals dehumanize other groups to protect their privileged positions and keep other groups in their places within the community, thus protecting the status quo.⁴¹ The perception or feeling of the loss of economic gains, urban space and national unity to Syrians in Turkey is an extension of this wish to maintain privileges and protect the status quo against Syrians. It is also noted, particularly for the opposition media in Turkey, that Syrians are portrayed as security risks, criminals and potential terrorists in order to criticize the Turkish government’s open-door policy and inclusive actions toward Syrians.⁴² In this case, dehumanizing refugees serves political interests, in this case to attack the political decisions of the government.

Marginalization of Refugees

In any social structure, there are some dominant groups at the core and in power while others are at the periphery. Marginalization is about producing this order in representation. Marginalization is “the presentation of social groups as outside society, as sitting on the edge and disconnected from the cohesive center.”⁴³ It attributes some morals to the group under discussion, raises concerns about whether the group can ever integrate with rest of the society and positions them as a threat to the culture, norms and values of the society. In this respect, marginalization targets newcomers and any minority groups already living within the society, for it raises a discussion that the group has failed to integrate.

The best examples of marginalization occurred in the post-September 11 environment targeting Muslim immigrants living in European societies. There were increased debates, particularly in countries with larger Muslim populations such as France, that Muslims were not able to integrate with the European way of life. As part of these debates, in 2004, France banned students from wearing any conspicuous religious garment or object in public schools, in the name of the principle of *laïcité*. The law targeted all religions; however, it was argued that it disproportionately affected Muslim schoolgirls wearing headscarves.⁴⁴ In 2010, France also banned the concealment of the face in public spaces, for the purpose of public security. The ban had the effect of forbidding the wearing of the Islamic *niqab* and *burqa*, which covers the whole body, and in 2012 two Muslim women were prosecuted, convicted and fined for wearing *niqab*. Following their complaints to the UN Human Rights Committee, the Committee decided in 2018 that the ban on the *niqab* was a violation of human rights and it “could have the effect of confining [veiled women] to their homes, impeding their access to public services and marginalizing them.”⁴⁵

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At the heart of these bans was a view that perceived the cultural values of Muslim immigrants as a threat to French secularism and security. Seeing Muslims’ lifestyles as a cultural threat, their use of cultural symbols was criminalized, and thus Muslim groups’ cultural habits were excluded from public spaces. This was an example of marginalizing Muslim minorities through a concern and anxiety regarding their cultures.

Actually, the claim that Eastern and Muslim cultures are not compatible with Western values is the main argument of the clash of civilizations thesis, which is a contemporary form of orientalist discourse.⁴⁶ Samuel Huntington’s thesis of the clash of civilizations defines Eastern cultures, particularly the Middle East and Islam, as the source of terrorism and violence, and posits Islam as the main threat to Western civilization.⁴⁷ This orientalist notion today particularly attacks Muslim immigrants, refugees and minorities living in Western societies and the phrase “the Orient within” is often used to refer to them.

One study that explores how the media represent and marginalize Muslim immigrants in Australia through the use of an orientalist discourse was conducted by Peter Manning.⁴⁸ Resembling Edward Said's much-quoted work *Covering Islam*, Manning explores the coverage of Muslims, Arabs and the Middle East in the Australian media in the years before and after September 11, 2001. He examines the language, images and narratives used in the media and argues that Arabs and Muslims are represented as unapproachable and unassimilable groups in society; their cultures are represented not only as different but also as an obstacle for cohesion and co-existence. He comes to the conclusion that orientalism is the main discourse shaping the representations of Muslims in the media, reproducing the idea of the incompatibility of Muslim immigrants' beliefs and values with the Western way of life.

It may be concluded, therefore, that one effect of marginalization is to produce a crisis mentality that provokes anxiety among the public by portraying the lives and views of immigrants and refugees as a (cultural) threat to "our" culture and common way of life. When their cultures are portrayed in opposition to the dominant group's values, these groups are positioned as against the social order, so their values and views are outlawed and marginalized altogether. In this way, marginalization feeds the perception of threat and the negative attitudes toward immigrants and refugees, and works against their social cohesion with the host community.

Homogenization and De-individualization of Refugees

Another problem occurring in the representations of refugees is homogenization. This refers to representing the refugee population as a uniform group sharing the same characteristics and conditions, as if they were all of the same kind. This is in large part the result of representing refugees stereotypically as either helpless victims or threats to society. These stereotypical representations reduce them to a few properties and erase the diverse individual differences and experiences, such as the experiences of refugee entrepreneurs and initiatives, as discussed above. Therefore, homogenization also produces the effect of the de-individualization of refugees.

Refugees are de-individualized when they are represented without individual characteristics. Georgiou and Zaborowski illustrate this point in their report about the press coverage of the 2015 "refugee crisis" in eight European countries (the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Serbia and the United Kingdom).⁴⁹ One of their findings reveals that although there is much said about refugees in the press, refugee descriptions are highly limited. The news do not give information about refugees' names, gender,

age, profession or skills. Similarly, information about their individual stories, lives and cultures is also limited. That is to say that information about who these people are is absent in the news and “refugees thus emerge from these narratives as an anonymous, unskilled group.”⁵⁰

Another way in which homogenization and de-individualization occur concerns how refugees are named or labelled. Studies on the European press⁵¹ and Turkish media⁵² reveal that the generic term “Syrians” is used to refer to Syrian refugees in the news; they are named after their national or ethnic identity. The labels that express political statuses such as temporary protection, refugee, asylum seeker or immigrant occur less often. The use of the generic name “Syrians,” rather than a political status, produces some consequences.

As mentioned above, when people’s political statuses are not used, the reasons why they left their country, why they are in Turkey and what rights they have in Turkey are forgotten in the news and this makes it difficult to discuss their conditions through a rights-based perspective. Second, the generic name “Syrians” does not make a differentiation between those Syrians who fled to Turkey and those living in Syria and other countries.⁵³ However, it is known that many Syrians who fled to Turkey were living close to Turkish borders or had relatives in Turkey, which indicates that they had relations with Turkey previously, rather than being total strangers to the country and its culture. Third, as the generic name “Syrians” emphasizes the ethnic origin of the Syrian community in Turkey, it positions Syrians (them) as an out-group with an ethnic identity distinct from Turks (us). In this way, the naming of Syrians, and referring to social groups by their ethnic group identities in general, emphasizes social and cultural differences between the refugee group and the host community, and thus may serve to maintain separation and distance between them, rather than making a contribution to social cohesion.

Portrayals of Refugees Steering Inclusion and Social Cohesion

As much as the media’s representation practices may promote separation and exclusion, the media’s main role is recognized as bringing people together around an imagined community by disseminating cultural norms, values and emotions, and enabling them to imagine themselves as part of the larger society, even if they have no direct interaction with each other.⁵⁴ In that respect, the media can mobilize masses toward a socially cohesive society. In terms of promoting cohesion and acceptance of immigrants and refugees, certain modes of reporting and representation are consulted. One of them aims at empathizing with refugees, the other one is a specific approach to journalism called rights-based journalism.

Empathizing with Refugees

Empathy is proposed as a key element to reduce prejudice and increase positive attitudes toward foreigners.⁵⁵ The media's potential in mobilizing feelings of empathy between groups is recognized by many institutions and NGOs. Particularly when conflicts were accelerating in Syria, various international NGOs and charities initiated campaigns to inform the world about what is happening in Syria and how Syrians are affected by the situation. In one of these campaigns, the international charity group Save the Children produced two short films titled *Most Shocking Second a Day*⁵⁶ in 2014 and *Still the Most Shocking a Day*⁵⁷ in 2016. The films recreate the real situations experienced in Syria as happening in London and show how a British child's life was transformed over a year of war. The first film starts with footage of a British girl happily blowing out candles on a birthday cake with her parents, then over the scenes of her secure and settled life we hear the television news reporting about the outbreak of conflicts in the country which is followed by gradually increasing sounds and views of bombings in the city. The girl and her parents leave their home for a safer place; they live on the streets and in parks before they end up at a refugee camp where the father is separated from the girl and the mother. One year passes in the camp and the video ends with footage of the little girl and her mother in a refugee tent. The mother has made a simple desert with a birthday candle on it, telling the little girl to make a wish. The scene concludes with a dramatic and haunting saddened look in her eyes, which can be interpreted as her one wish would be having her father and her life back. The second film, which was produced two years after the first one, shows what happens next to the mother and the girl. The film shows that the war has spread to other places in the country, including where the refugee camp is located. The mother finds a place only for one in a refugee boat and puts the girl in the boat with the hope of saving her life initially and reuniting with her in another country. The boat sinks, the girl is found unconscious on a shore and placed in a refugee camp. The two films end with the texts, "Just because it isn't happening here doesn't mean it isn't happening" and "It is happening now. It's happening here."

The most important effect of the two films on the viewer is that by replacing the stereotypical image of the refugee with a Western girl and by reforming the situation in a Western context, they communicate the message that wars can happen anywhere and when they happen people are affected in the same way regardless of their ethnicity, nationality or religion. They intend portray the similarity between the Western and non-Western people to produce empathy.

Another important power of the films is that by depicting the lives of people before they become “refugees,” they provide a non-stereotypical image of refugees and make people see refugees for who they are: regular, ordinary people whose lives have fallen apart because of war and persecution. Thus, representing refugees as ordinary people depicts the human qualities of refugees and challenges the dehumanization and marginalization of refugees. Ordinarity also reminds the viewers that the terms ‘refugee’ or ‘asylum seeker’ do not define who they are but define their conditions or political statuses. In this way, representations that highlight the ordinarity of refugees show them as sharing similar features with us (non-refugees) and aim to bridge the constructed difference between “us” and “them,” which is a big step toward acceptance and inclusion.

Rights-based Approach to Covering Refugees

Recently, the term rights-based journalism has been used as an approach to journalism that aims at ending social conflicts between groups in society. Rights-based journalism as a practice aims to draw attention to violations of rights and to make news focusing on the rights of people.⁵⁸ It particularly focuses on protecting the rights of minority, disadvantaged and marginalized groups including women, children, immigrants, refugees, etc. It is a type of journalism that informs the public about the human rights as well as the economic, social and political rights of individuals. Reporting on human rights is important to increasing the public’s knowledge of their rights and the rights of others. This also raises a perception that violations of rights will not be ignored, and will be reported and known, which increases a sense of security and awareness among the public.

A UNESCO report identifies the principles of a rights-based approach to journalism; these principles are also important while reporting on refugees.⁵⁹ According to the first principle, when reporting on refugees, journalists should refer to the relevant conventions (e.g. Geneva Refugee Convention, human rights conventions, or policies at the national level that concern the protection of refugees) that their governments have signed. This informs the public about international obligations toward refugees and about refugees’ rights. A second principle requires the participation of all of the affected parties in the news. Most of the time, the media exclude the views of disadvantaged and marginalized groups, which is the case for representations of refugees in international and Turkish media alike. However, the inclusion of refugee voices should be a priority in the news to achieve power balances in reporting and prevent the marginalization of these groups. According to the third principle, just as a rights-based approach identifies the rights-

holders, it should also identify the duty-bearers, those who are responsible for protecting and fulfilling these rights. Duty-bearers are mostly governments, NGOs, individuals, local organizations, authorities, private companies and international institutions. The fourth principle demands that the reported opinions should not cause a risk for refugees and their well-being. Finally, a rights-based approach to journalism should empower the rights-holder, give voice to them, let them express their concerns and needs and contribute to the enhancement of their capacities to claim their rights.

The rights-based approach to journalism has benefits to empower and promote the rights of all individuals; however, this approach may produce some unwanted effects, particularly for refugees. It is explained above that when

The rights-based approach to journalism has benefits to empower and promote the rights of all individuals; however, this approach may produce some unwanted effects, particularly for refugees.

refugees are represented and perceived as helpless victims in need, it becomes easier to raise empathy and acceptance for their presence and stay in the country. This emotional and humanitarian approach has significant benefits, for

example, when the Turkish government opened the borders to Syrians and asked for hospitality and understanding from the Turkish community to help our “guests” and “brothers.” A rights-based approach proposing that these are people with rights might not have produced the same impact and the same positive emotions such as sympathy, which led the Turkish people to act with great responsibility and benevolence. This is to suggest that when reporting on refugees, the benefits and the outcomes of the rights-based approach and the emotional/humanitarian approach should be taken into consideration and, where necessary, they should both be put to work in the service of fostering a socially cohesive society. It is clear that the rights-based journalism approach is necessary to raise respect and understanding for refugees, whereas a humanitarian/emotional approach is beneficial for evoking positive feelings of compassion toward one another.

Conclusion

While debating about the best solutions for the future of Syrians in Turkey, we should also discuss ways of coexisting in peace during the time we live together. The opinions and feelings that Syrian and Turkish communities hold toward each other are the most important elements that organize the social interactions between them and contribute to a peaceful or conflictual coexistence. A big part of public perception is fed by media representations.

This study has discussed in what ways media representations of refugees promote their inclusion or exclusion in society, leading to well-functioning or conflicting social relationship between groups.

The media's representation practices work in various and complex ways toward the exclusion of refugees. The study has identified and discussed the ways in which stereotypical refugee representations produce effects of victimization, depoliticization, dehumanization, marginalization, homogenization and de-individualization of refugees. These effects of media portrayals stigmatize refugees as "other" in different ways and work against their inclusion and acceptance in society, thus playing a role toward the emergence of social conflict between refugee and host communities.

On the other hand, the media may also challenge the stigmatized identity of the refugee. When the media function to motivate empathy and understanding between communities, they highlight the ordinariness of refugees and depict their similarities with non-refugees by portraying them, for example, as people who once were members of a happy family who had a happy life just like us. Such representations remind the public that numbers or various labels, such as floods or terrorists, do not define refugees; they are people whose lives have fallen apart due to circumstances they are not responsible for. Thus, representing refugees as ordinary people produces an effect of empathizing with them and facilitates acceptance toward them. Also, representing refugees from a rights-based journalism approach reminds the public that we, as the signatories of certain conventions, have responsibilities toward people who cannot return to their country safely. **While perceiving refugees and justifying their inclusion from an emotional and humanitarian approach (rather than a rights-based approach) may help to raise empathy, also being aware that they are people with certain rights under the state's protection may help raise respect toward them, which is also essential for their well-being.**

Consequently, this study has discussed that the media are both a problem, because their effects directly or indirectly produce prejudice, exclusion and conflict toward those who are perceived as 'others;' while they are also part

of the solution because their portrayals of people facilitate understanding, inclusion and cohesion, and provide people with motives to live together across their differences and through their commonalities. In a world in which people are forced to leave their countries for different reasons, seeking ways to exist together in peace is a social responsibility for all.

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ARTICLE

“Who Shall Return us the Children?” Picturing Home(lessness) and Postcolonial Childhoods in Immigrant Children’s Literature

Leyla SAVSAR*

Abstract

How does literature for children portray homes lost and perhaps found? Does children’s literature liberate or subjugate with these representations? What kinds of perspectives do the written and visual representations in children’s narratives offer? How is the experience of subjugated childhoods represented in these narratives? How is the sense of self and sense of place, namely home, represented in both word and image? The literary representation of children is contingent upon pre-established notions of political formations and identity, namely the dynamics of the subjugated and subjugator. Employing theories from canonical critics in the field of postcolonial study, this paper looks at several children’s narratives to explore the value of children’s stories in representing home(lessness) from the perspective of child immigrants and refugees. It argues for the need to question whether these representations in children’s narratives subjugate or liberate, considering how children’s books can be seen as political acts. It argues that literature for children can be used as a tool of criticism to critique certain ideologies (and the existing social order and postcolonial ties). Considering the relationship between the individual and the state, it concludes by considering children’s narratives as a way of configuring and even overturning the notion of home(lessness) and the significant question of whether a return to the homeland is ever possible.

Keywords

Migration, children literature, transnationalism, postcolonialism, homeland.

* Assistant Professor, İstinye University, Department of English Language and Literature, İstanbul, Turkey. E-mail: leyla.savsar@istinye.edu.tr. ORCID: 0000-0002-9630-2462.

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Introduction

As neoliberal globalization continues to exacerbate inequality within the developing world, “the harsh measures taken by governments of developing countries against their refugee and migrant populations are likely to increase.”¹ Geographies associated with neoliberal globalization are implicated in conceptions of political belonging. The transnational lens challenges these conceptions, questioning the categorization of literature that explores the relationship between nationhood and children’s texts. What is meant here by ‘children’s texts’ or ‘children’s literature’? In the words of Roger Sale, “everyone knows what children’s literature is until [they are] asked to define it.”² If it is defined as literature read by young people, the categorization might seem too broad, encompassing a wide range of audience. While it is read by children and adults alike, children’s literature comprises texts addressed for children. Yet, “basing a definition on authorial definitions seems problematic.”³ Perry Nodelman contends that “defining children’s literature has been a major activity of children’s literature criticism throughout its history.”⁴ While the narratives explored in this paper address children from primary to middle school, the metaphorical appeal is to childhood and “particularly the centrality of the metaphor of childhood to legitimizing colonialism.”⁵ However, the depiction of this complex adult-child and nation-child relation is meant for the more mature reader. While not produced by children, the texts chosen here attempt to offer the perspective of the colonized child, which might also inadvertently shape the non-colonized child. Perhaps this is where an analysis of the art forms and language is crucial for understanding the agenda behind such narratives. Recent scholarship in children’s literature shows a wide variety of critical interests in exploring children’s narratives with their mixed-media artwork, collages of photographs, paintings and witty texts. Our senses are the core of culture and expression. A multidimensional approach to political belongings provides a starting point for the challenges raised by the claims and experiences of migrants. In that vein, the success or failure of narrating a story condemned to the realm of historical configurations and nostalgia lies in its telling—both visual and textual. Children by default are the subaltern as they cannot have their voices heard unless they are granted a legal platform. Young people’s identities are connected to national and global influences. In that sense, “children remain the most colonized persons on the globe.”⁶ This becomes apparent in the literature targeted for children. Where does the story of subjugated childhoods begin? To which point in history can we trace back

with the purpose of uncovering the nation in children's literature? Will nation or the concept of home be defined in terms of childhood?

A late twentieth century reality, colonialism can be traced back to when the imperial nations of modern Europe established dominion over non-European peoples, thus engaging in the domestication of children. Moreover, the twentieth century imperial connections led to international migration patterns between former colonial powers and conduits of empire. In his book *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Edward Said commented that colonizers and the colonized become intertwined as a result of their histories, whereby their cultural geographies overlap.⁷ In Said's terms, "contemporary immigration policy cuts former colonial links and attempts to separate and disaggregate the post-colonial cultural landscape," which makes it difficult for young people who have long-standing postcolonial connections to fully integrate or 'enter' new homelands.⁸ Navigating a world of negative connotations that alienate, marginalize and discriminate, young migrants narrate the feeling of not being wanted, or being excluded from certain hierarchies of society. As such, modern literature contributes significantly to the child's sense of self and becoming in a world where young people's identities are increasingly connected to a plurality of categories that transcend ethnicity. Continuously constructing their identities, young people with immigrant backgrounds are discovering and re-discovering their positions and roles in society. The impact of these changes are not to be underestimated. In examining the relationship between empire and children's literature, it is found that:

literature for children effectively undertakes to make a child, a making that inscribes the particularity of contemporary social relations [...] However, one must recognize that the conception and development of a literature for children is not universal or transcultural, nor certainly transhistorical; it is an idea, an invention, very closely linked with modern Western societies.⁹

It should be taken into account that child and young adult immigrants "cross not only geographical/political borders but also biographical/social ones," given that "they are moving into the host society but also into adulthood," a duality that increases their vulnerability.¹⁰ Taking the examples of migrant narratives explored in this paper, I aim to address the question of borders and identities, as well as the rhetoric of power politics in certain children's narratives. In doing so, I intend to showcase the relation between the literary

representation of children and the postcolonial framework of thinking and discourse.

Transnationalism, Postcolonialism and Children's Literature

While transnationalism is not a new phenomenon, it is uniquely visible in colonial texts, from which power politics such as racial divisions and alterities emerge. The term 'transnational' implies a form of duality. In that

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sense, "transnational identities are formed when individuals and groups negotiate between and across cultures and languages."¹¹

My own experience is somewhat symptomatic of such negotiations.

A Turkish native, I was born in

Saudi Arabia and grew up in Kuwait, moving to the United States in order to take up doctoral studies. As a child, I read English, Turkish and Arabic literature, feeling myself to have more in common with Western characters, oddly. It is no surprise that "geography is a crucial determinant of how transnationalism operates."¹²

Rudyard Kipling's poem, "The Children" (1914) provides a compelling example of imperial relationships intertwined with cultural geographies and overlapping histories:

These were our children who died for our lands: they were
dear in our sight.
We have only the memory left of their home-treasured sayings
and laughter.
The price of our loss shall be paid to our hands, not another's
hereafter.
Neither the Alien nor Priest shall decide on it. That is our right.
But who shall return us the children?
At the hour the Barbarian chose to disclose his pretences,
And raged against Man, they engaged, on the breasts that they
bared for us,
The first felon-stroke of the sword he had long-time prepared
for us—
Their bodies were all our defence while we wrought our
defences.

[...]

Nor was their agony brief, or once only imposed on them.

The wounded, the war-spent, the sick received no exemption:

Being cured they returned and endured and achieved our redemption,

Hopeless themselves of relief, till Death, marveling, closed on them. *But who shall return us our children?*"¹³

Given that Kipling observed army life firsthand as a child in the Bombay of the British Raj and as a young newspaper man, the poem speaks for all parents of children bereaved by war, severed links and post-colonial ties. Given the charges of racism and imperialism levied against him, it is only befitting to explore Kipling's poem from a postcolonial perspective. A unique war poem packed with rhythm and images of mutilation and decay, "The Children" paints a portrait of innocence tainted in the hands of 'Barbarians' evident in the discourse and use of words that ascribe the privileged place of the wagers of wars over the 'corrupted cleanness' of children 'senselessly tossed and re-tossed'. Portrayed as a shield of defense, the body of the child remains dominated by the "unavoidable effects of globalization, de-territorialization, and neo-liberal politics."¹⁴ The discourse of 'we/us' versus 'they/their' emphasizes the dynamics of the helpless and voiceless child figure in contrast to the privileged self and perpetrators of war. Yet, the repetitive use of 'us,' 'we' and 'our' concurrently heightens the sense of collective bereavement.

While there is no impetus of empire in the poem, the decay imposed by World War I can be understood as a subject of the foundation of the modern world built on longstanding ideologies of colonialism and the claiming of borders. Bearing witness to the subjugation of childhoods, whether wounded by war or subjugated under Barbarian 'presentences', the question of the bereaved adult figure remains the same: "Who shall return us our children?" Disregarding a return from the dead and re-contextualizing the poem, perhaps the question begged is, return where, and is this return possible? I overturn this question as follows: Where shall these excluded children of dual vulnerabilities return? To homelands ravaged by war? Or to borders re-named and re-claimed? While not all migrations and subjugations are driven by war, the world is currently facing the worst migration crisis since World War II. A great number "fleeing their home countries are from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, collectively making up more than half of all asylum-seekers around the world in 2015, according to the UN refugee agency."¹⁵

In that vein, subjugated childhoods and children forced to flee their homelands can best be understood in light of migrant discourse. According to Edward Said, migrancy involves a ‘discontinuous state of being’ a form of picking a quarrel with where you come from. Moreover, hybridity entails the transgression of ethnic or national borders in order to challenge existing paradigms of identity. Given that migration involves a movement in which identities are constantly subject to mutation, many theorists consider it crucial to develop a framework of thinking in which the migrant figure is depicted as a subject with agency. The immigrant must be central, not marginal, to the historic processes, free to assemble, remember, speak and rewrite his or her story—acts that are essential to the possibility of resistance in the face of colonial subjugation or neocolonial exploitation. In other words, it is essential to look at where migrants are situated in their own narratives. In order to conceptualize the possibility of resistance against the power politics from which terrible consequences such as displacement and human dispossessions emerge, we have to consider the narratives that portray the voiceless child figure in a different light.

Child protagonists illustrate that agency is particularly challenging to interpret in texts that are highly mediated by adults and adult institutions. I emphasize the importance of the study of children’s narratives to help conceptualize and shed light on how migrant child protagonists imagine nations and construct identities within particular cultural contexts and geographies of power, namely the deconstruction of the possibility of home and refuge in a world of homogenized spaces of globalization. As they navigate the transnational spaces of biculturalism, the child migrants in these literary texts are able to see both sides and explore new sites of identity. Contradicting preconceived, adult-dominated notions of the subservient and dependent child protagonist,

Child protagonists illustrate that agency is particularly challenging to interpret in texts that are highly mediated by adults and adult institutions.

I argue that when subjected to the disruptive and cataclysmic experience of migration, representations of displaced children who are forced to balance multiple identities can act as counter-hegemonic subjects who

do not easily or readily conform to power-political paradigms. Instead, they play the significant role of inventors of culture rather than mere appropriators or learners. Despite the undoubted importance of these perspectives, to date there has been remarkably little research on diasporic children in children’s

literature. This is mainly due to the fact that, within discussions of diasporic communities children are generally over-looked or little consideration is given to their role(s). This lack of consideration calls for research that challenges the dominant views of adult-centric research and literature.

Situated in the epoch of modern warfare, where the ambitions of totalitarian leaders result in the cultural fragmentation, exploitation, and commodification of subjugated groups, literary representations of colonized childhoods can be used to naturalize subservience and deny agency. It is therefore critical, in our current age of mass immigration and displacement, to consider alternate depictions of displaced persons and challenge conventional portrayals, which is what this paper aims to address. Counter-hegemonic portrayals in children's literature can challenge the biased portrayals of subjugated childhoods. This analysis considers the role of home and homelessness in children's narratives. It showcases how, once granted an awareness of the notion of home and the homeland, child migrants can perhaps configure their own conceptualizations and question the imposed ideologies that translate into their everyday lives. Such a claim may seemingly idealize visions of home or the homeland through the child's eyes, but it is this conceptualization that considers the realities of the human condition through a transnational reading. The narratives explored include Fran Leeper Buss's *Journey of the Sparrows* (1991), Ibtisam Barakat's *Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood* (2007) and Katherine Applegate's *Home of the Brave* (2007) among other children's (illustrated) narratives, which are set against the contextual backgrounds of Latino, Middle Eastern and Asian heritage, respectively. The narratives chosen here are yoked together by the very diversity of the perspectives that they offer.

What makes these narratives comparable is their association with geographies implicating mixed migration flows of irregular migrants. I suggest that narratives set in these geographies of irregular migration flows and new conceptions of political belonging may provide some clues as to how identities are formed in these frontiers that challenge and are challenged by complex histories. These literary and visual (illustrated) representations portray the child as an allegory for the colonized nation dependent on the parental figure(s)—a metaphor for the colonizing power(s). These narratives foreground the struggles of the child protagonists as they journey from repression toward forms of self-knowledge and active citizenship that, in the words of Chambers, echoing Benjamin "depend upon the recalling and re-telling of earlier fragments and traces that flare up and flash in [their] present 'moment of danger' as they come

These literary and visual (illustrated) representations portray the child as an allegory for the colonized nation dependent on the parental figure(s)—a metaphor for the colonizing power(s).

to live on in new constellations.”¹⁶ However, the road to such new constellations is a bumpy one, as it requires the displaced children of migrant families to inhabit two (or more) worlds simultaneously, traverse a complex history and learn how to navigate multiple

identities on both a national and an individual level under the dominion of authority figures. While these narratives are culturally and historically variable, they converge in representing subjugated childhoods and severed links with homeland(s). These narratives provide realistic portrayals of how young people navigate boundaries and interrogate the motives and consequences of migration in order to be heard and seen. An intermix of illustrated narratives is included to offer perspective on the growing importance of the visual in the child’s subject formation.

I consider the visual representations aside from the textual as central to examining in what ways art forms assert the celebration of human worth and how these texts enunciate powerful modes of resistance to the subjectivities in globalization. I claim that understanding these constructions as central to the construction of children in the context of transnationalism and changing global paradigms motivates the affiliation between studies in children’s literature and postcolonial discourse. This study aims to situate children’s narratives amidst transnational discourse to help conceptualize existing and shifting paradigms of the displaced individual’s notion of home. More specifically, the study focuses on the following research question: How are notions of home and homelessness depicted in narratives written for children? In presenting a literary analysis of the chosen narratives through a transnational lens, this paper aims to address the following questions: How does literature for children portray homes lost and perhaps found? What kinds of perspectives of home do the written and visual representations in children’s narratives offer?

Going Home

Written by Eve Bunting and illustrated by David Diaz, *Going Home* (1996) addresses the interconnections of home and memory, foregrounding the following question: can home be a place you do not really remember? The protagonist Carlos and his family drive South across the border to Mexico, a place that does not seem like home to Carlos, even though he and his sisters

were born there. The villages they pass by all look alike to Carlos. Confused by his mother's claims, "home is here, but it is there, too," Carlos and his sisters are not so sure, stating, "Mexico is not our home, though we were born there."¹⁷ The anxiety of border crossings is apparent as Carlos questions, "are you sure they will let us back, Papa?" Trying to ease their worries, Papa claims in broken English that they have nothing to worry about as they have their legal papers. "Now we are in Mexico. I see no difference, but Mama does,"¹⁸ claims Carlos. Severed links and border crossings paint the portrait of a child estranged from the supposed homeland, their village, La Perla, in Mexico although this is not reflected in the wide-eyed, almost comical illustrations of the characters.

Children's narratives written by adult authors raise the question of whether adults 'colonize' young readers. While the argument can be made that the literature that children read may participate in a 'colonizing enterprise', the illustrations in this text, which seem to counteract the cultural anxiety, draw the readers into a world not as adults construct it but as children see it. Carlos questions why his parents left the village of La Perla if it was so 'pretty'. The lack of ideal conditions and the exploited labor of the immigrant is evident in the adult's search for opportunity beyond the borders of rural life. The child narrator, who also works on weekends and school vacations, is aware of how "hard the work is" with its tough working conditions such as the "the heat in the strawberry fields," the sun and the flies. Oblivious to the potential 'opportunities' that the adults seek, the landscapes through which they drive all look the same to the children.

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While the tone of the narrative is grim, the illustrations contradict this, providing insight into the child's jumbled world of buzzing energy, perpetual movement and lively color. Absent from these illustrations are any explicit historical undercurrents, which the text implicitly delivers. The faces are

expressionless for the most part, and the villages are portrayed beautifully, complementing the use of warm colors that exude a sense of homeliness tinged with the undeniable presence of nostalgia. The portrait of home is ideally represented as communion and family reunion, which the reader realizes through Carlos's eyes: "Grandfather and Aunt Ana hug us. They don't feel like strangers." Reunited with family members, Carlos envisions a utopic scenario, where his parents dance with no music, forgetting their worries and bodily aches and pains of labor. While the visuals depict a state of euphoria, the truth is exposed in the written word through the child narrator's realization and grand reveal: "There is a terrible ache in my chest. They love it here because it's home. They left home for us." These words denote a subtle yet certain transition from childhood to adulthood, a vulnerability portrayed in the juxtaposition of text and illustration. Picturing his parents dancing in the streets of La Perla under the shining moon, Carlos comes to terms with the idealized notion that home can be anywhere if it is kept alive in the hearts of the people who love him. Inexperienced and innocent, the child figure is thus tied to nature and the environment metaphorically the same way the colonized is visualized in the eyes of the colonizer. The attempt of postcolonial reading and criticism, then, is not necessarily to decolonize the children but to show that "although children and their literature are not inevitably outside a Eurocentric vision of things, they do represent a challenge to the traditions of mainstream culture."¹⁹ A term so widely contested, 'postcolonialism' in children's literature, then, "serves to mean many things to many people."²⁰ What is of central importance here is how children's literature manifests Eurocentric biases and portrays victims of imperialism, particularly children that may grow out of their colonial practices and attitudes.

Journey of the Sparrows

Given the variegated nature of movements in Mexico, most analysts characterize this flow as mixed migration. In October 2018, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted a rapid survey of a group of Salvadoran migrants who made the journey north. It found that "nearly 52% cited economic opportunity as their motive for leaving the region, 18% cited violence and insecurity, 2% cited family reunification, and 28% cited a combination of those factors."²¹ Buss's *Journey of the Sparrows* spotlights the plight of Central American child refugees as they arrive in the United States from El Salvador jammed together inside a nailed-up crate. While this narrative does not provide illustrations, the rich use of language and diction inscribe place and the sense of home(lessness). By depicting a corrupt state

bureaucracy under which those directly affected by displacement are estranged and de-familiarized, the narrative lays bare how power operates to exclude and discriminate against certain groups, especially colonized children, who are doubly marginalized, disempowered, excluded and forced to flee their war-torn homelands. The recipient of the Jane Addams Children's Book Award, this novel, published in 1991, relies heavily on symbolism and imagery as it paints a binary portrait of the hardships that merge with the hopes and dreams of the displaced Latin American child. It provides a grim look into the life of fifteen-year-old María; her older sister, Julia; their little brother, Oscar; and a boy named Tomás, all of whom must endure a torturous and terrifying journey across the U.S. border, fleeing violence and poverty to face an uncertain future as illegal immigrants. The events unfold from María's vantage point. The novel opens with a vivid description of the dreary and brutal conditions in which the siblings are smuggled into the United States before traveling north to Chicago:

My sister, brother, and I were pressed together in the dark crate... "Immigration, *la migra*. Be still!" warned the man who was smuggling us north... [Another man's] voice sounded cruel, like the voices of the government soldiers, the Guardias who had come to our house before... I tried to think of my home... We'd been so poor at home. Just flowers and hunger... I jerked my head...back and forth in the crate, trying not to remember... Finally I no longer moved or thought but lay silently against the other bodies.²²

Interspersed throughout the novel and framed with significant symbols and metaphors are accounts of traumatic remembrances such as this one, which reflect María's yearning for her homeland despite its poverty and oppression. Embedded in this traumatic longing is the need to archive the irreversible order of the events that constitute her identity. While María tries to suppress her memories, she does not bypass nostalgia because the sentiment of displacement itself is at the very core of this affective dimension, which she must navigate via the compass of memory in order to begin the healing process. Because María lacks historical consciousness, in place of overtly historical and political representations of El Salvador's struggle with conquests and corruption the narrative substitutes vivid, almost mythical portrayals of her homeland as she imagines and remembers it. It is worth quoting an extended passage to convey the intended somatic effect:

I squeezed my eyes shut, despite the darkness in the crate, and tried to see the colors. The piercing blue of the sky, always with me, seemed to pull me upward, and I felt it touch my cheeks and calm my face, like my mother's hand on me when I was younger. Then I saw our land during the rainy season. The world was green, and immense white clouds shared with me their secret faces of the saints. Flocks of green and yellow parakeets soared over our heads, and in October, light pink coffee blossoms whispered their sweet smell into the clear air. Our brown-and-white rooster crowed at dawn each day, and in the evenings, sunsets wove the clothes of the Indians from Papá's stories, using yarns of red, gold, violet, and blue. Inside the church, the blue robes, yellow flowers, and the holy faces of the Virgin and the saints gave us courage.²³

While this slow rhythm of reflected time and the idealized pastoral scene might confuse the actual home and the imaginary one, María's dream refigures her past as a safe space in which she can comfort and fortify herself. Although this confusion is recognized as a danger of nostalgia—in extreme cases one could be driven to kill for a phantom homeland—it does not necessarily emerge as a threat or opposition to progress in the child protagonist's mind, but rather as an empowered rebellion, or as Boym puts it, “refusing to surrender to the irreversibility of time that plagues the human condition.”²⁴ Defined by Boym as “a sentiment of loss and displacement,”²⁵ María's nostalgia is also “a romance with one's own fantasy”—in this case a fantasy of returning not to the homeland but to a childhood that was never embodied or rightfully lived. Such disillusionment creates a barrier that divides the past from the present. Drawing from the memories of her homeland, which are laced with both historical and imagined accounts, María seeks refuge by painting rosy, romanticized narratives of an almost mythical El Salvador for her younger brother Oscar:

The little boy's family lived in a home made of sticks... but the men burned the family's house. In the light of the fire, the children saw the colors from their village melt, then turn to gray... And so the family began their journey... “Don't be afraid,” the sparrow said to the children... I thought about the pink, yellow, and blue buildings in the village at home, remembered the hot, burning sun, and pictured the sparrow

from my story. In my mind, it perched on my shoulder and lit up all the gray buildings with color.²⁶

Living at the intersection of historicity and memory, where both are fragmented, María creates her own perception of the national past by painting it over with her own designated choice of colors, replacing the gray tint of oppression with the promise of a rosy future. The future that she imagines and envisions reflects Benedict Anderson's definition of the nation as "an imagined political community... imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign."²⁷ María thus conceptualizes her own cultural-historical version of the homeland that comes into being from an essentially mythic framework of time, where imagination and reality are inextricably entangled. These nostalgic representations portray the child's rebellion against a warped history by imagining vibrant communities and homelands in the midst of shattered ones, where notions of captivity and violence are swept away by the majestically beautiful quetzals and the strong, free-spirited sparrows.

Having internalized her position as an illegal migrant in the national hierarchy and as the meek darker sibling in the family, María migrates independently this time to prove herself capable and visible in the face of the laws that have exploited her labor. She makes it past the immigration checkpoint before realizing that "saving Teresa wouldn't bring Papá back or always keep Oscar strong. It would have nothing to do with determining when [they would] be together with Mamá."²⁸ María awakens to the realization that the migrant's journey, depicted as an unending, circular narrative of loss and sorrow, serves as a vehicle for tracing the trajectory of a life spent seeking freedom from a forgotten past and a future with no new constellations.²⁹

Home of the Brave

Bestselling author Katherine Applegate's *Home of the Brave* (2008), voted Best Children's Book of the Year, is a middle grade novel written in poetic prose about a young immigrant's journey from hardship to hope. The novel's protagonist, Kek, comes from Africa to America where he experiences many firsts, like seeing snow for the first time, which, although seemingly endearing at first, deem the terms of his inclusion in a new culture more difficult. Having survived the civil war in Africa where his mother has gone missing, Kek tries to make a home in Minnesota's harsh winter by finding strength in his memories as he awaits word of his mother's fate. The events of the narrative unfold before Kek's eyes as the reader takes the journey vicariously

through the child protagonist's experiences: "When the flying boat returns to earth at last, I open my eyes and gaze out the round window. What is all the white, I whisper. Where is all the world?"³⁰ Applegate's diction and use of phrases like 'flying boat' capture the protagonist's child-like sense of wonder, curiosity, and fear in the face of a world so vastly different from the narrator's homeland. Stumbling over new English words he was taught in the refugee camp, which he compares to a song out of tune, Kek claims that "this America is hard work."³¹ Struggling to adapt to the ways of the modern world, Kek draws comparisons between his simple, primitive life in Africa, where his father had many cattle and his people were herders, and the 'modern' one in America where he is unfamiliar with appliances like dish washers, faucets, watches, and heaters: "In my old home, my real home, we were a family and our laughter kept us warm. We didn't need a magic switch on a wall... In the camp, I say, they called America heaven on earth," which he soon comes to realize is not really the case.³²

When forced on someone who is not Western, concepts of universality imply that the dominant culture should be the standard basis for measurement. Recalling the traumatic moments of war, Kek has nightmares of the raiding 'men with guns', blistered feet and dresses stained with blood, all visual depictions of the residues of imperial warfare and diasporic voices. Looking at himself in the mirror, Kek wonders if he looks like an American boy, unsure of whether that would be a "good thing or a not-good thing."³³ A sense of belonging and self-positioning emerges here as examples of the immigrant

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figure's inclusion/exclusion in society. Befriending a cow on a ranch run by an American woman he later befriends, Kek finds comfort and solace in this little piece of home he has

discovered. The classroom is where he acknowledges the diverse "colors of the earth—brown and pink and yellow and white and black"—all united to learn the same things, a tendency of postcolonial texts that bring difference into the foreground, "reminding us of the unnatural division of humans into hierarchical groups."³⁴ Kek's cousin Ganwar reminds him that he will never really feel like an American because "they won't let you,"³⁵ which once again corroborates how the outcast immigrant cannot cross the threshold of duality and truly arrive home or assimilate. On the other hand, America is presented as the 'great' country (land of the free and home of the brave as the title

connotes) where "a woman can do anything a man can do."³⁶ Discovering new tastes like chocolate and chocolate milk, Kek questions where he belongs, to which his cousin responds, "We don't belong here. This isn't our country. It never will be."³⁷ Ganwar, the young adult figure, grasps the true limits and boundaries of America, unwelcoming to poor and illegal immigrants. Still hopeful, Kek believes that perhaps someday they can go home again, where "the war is older than our fathers were [where] the war is forever."³⁸ Bullied and outcast, Kek retorts that America is place of pain, "an ugly land" that "needs endless horizons and emptiness," where "too many buildings block the sky [and] you can't even watch the sun."³⁹ Picturing the times "before the pain," he conjures up visions of his home in the moonlight, listens to his father sing, and yearns for his mother. The childhood's end is marked when Kek claims that he can no longer find the sun when the sky is dark like he used to be able to easily do as a child. He wonders if finding the sun is one way to be a man, a mark of masculinity he aspires to fulfill. Themes of hope and fear are juxtaposed in Kek's poetic words: "Hope is a thing made only for people, a scrap to hold onto in darkness and in light. But hope is hard work. When I was a child I hoped to fly. That was a silly, easy wish. Now my wishes are bigger, the hopes of a man."⁴⁰ Finally reunited with his long-lost mother, Kek, at a loss for words, welcomes her to his new 'home:' "I can't find words, there are no words, not in my old language, not in my new one. We walk together like one person."⁴¹ Belonging and identity is derived from blood ties here, where once a place of pain, America becomes home for Kek with the arrival of his mother. In that vein, postcolonialism becomes a manifestation for the desire of acceptance and understanding of otherness, where "the desire is always to become the other."⁴²

My Name is Yoon

Written by Helen Recorvits and illustrated by Gabi Swiatkowska, *My Name is Yoon* is a narrative about a Korean girl finding her place in a new country. Form meets content in this narrative, as the surreal illustrations provide an embodied and immersive experience of environment, working to etch into memory the aesthetic markers of a child's dream-like state of experiencing life in a new state of being. The pictorial symbols have a representational function, which are acknowledged through cultural differences similar to the ones Yoon identifies. Do children lack meta-knowledge of pictures or beliefs, or both? The answer to this is contingent on (cultural) exposure just like the process of language acquisition itself, which is a central theme in

this narrative and narratives of belonging. Learning to print her name in English, Yoon does not like the way her name looks ‘alone’ in English: “In Korean, my name means shining wisdom. I like the Korean way better... I did not want to learn the new way. I wanted to go back to Korea. I did not like America. Everything was different here.”⁴³ On her first day at school, Yoon learns the corresponding letters for the word ‘cat’, which she prefers over Yoon: “I wanted to be CAT. I wanted to hide in a corner.” Exposed to new English words, Yoon begins to draw and identify with each, expressing her desire to return home in familiar illustrations represented by unfamiliar letters: “I wanted to be BIRD. I wanted to fly back to Korea. I wanted to be CUPCAKE.” While children generally lack an understanding of the representational function of pictures, studies show that “the ability to appreciate the shared representational convention of pictorial symbols is founded on understanding the shared nature of communicative intentions” and that “cultural supports are necessary for the acquisition of symbolic systems,”⁴⁴ which in this case is embodied by the uncanny illustrations parallel to the acquiring of English, a foreign language for Yoon. In that sense, examples of belonging and ‘self-positioning’ here emerge visually in the integration of language and visual representation. The social referencing of symbolic functions suggest representational knowledge and referential understanding, which is achieved when children can begin to use language to communicate goals.⁴⁵

The desire to become the other is once again manifested here as Yoon joins the English-speaking world or, as she imagines it, the community of drawings. She is gradually convinced by adult figures that “maybe America will be a good home” and that “maybe different is good too.” She claims, “yes, I am Yoon,” writing her name in English after having resisted; she realizes her name still means shining wisdom despite the different form. Form and content overlap in this narrative to foreground the postcolonial theme of language as the preserver of identity.

Tasting the Sky

Ibtisam Barakat’s *Tasting the Sky* (2007) similarly situates the child migrant in the spatial dimensions of exclusion and a shattered homeland. What distinguishes this bildungsroman from the preceding narratives is the use of flashbacks and memories characteristic of autobiography. Set against the background of the Palestinian city of Ramallah during the aftermath of the 1967 Six-Day War between Israel and the neighboring states of Egypt, Jordan and Syria, *Tasting*

the Sky captures the harshness of life as a refugee in the Middle East. Forced to flee their home in the formerly Jordanian-held West Bank, the Barakat family migrate into Jordan and remain there as refugees for more than four months. Ibtisam's perspective provides a sympathetic glimpse into the realities of war, particularly the hardships of fleeing the shattered homeland, separation from family, and passionate connection to words, inasmuch as the discovery of Alef (the first letter of the Arabic language) becomes her refuge and the language with which she pieces together the fragments of her story and her country. Divided into three parts, the novel reflects Ibtisam's memory as she reminisces about the stages of childhood and growing up in the midst of war. Situated literally and figuratively in between fluid yet impenetrable boundaries, Ibtisam mediates between binaries, the visible and the invisible, the oppressor and the oppressed, and the colonizer and the colonized. Empowered by the written word and her imagination, she writes,

I have my freedom. It is hidden in Post Office Box 34...
Having this box is like having a country, the size of a tiny square, all to myself...Paper and ink, poems and my postbox are medicines that heal the wounds of a life without freedom...But when they ask me about my childhood, suddenly I have nothing to say. It's like a curtain comes down and hides my memories.⁴⁶

Uprooted in a war-torn homeland where she is told to forget everything, Ibtisam hesitates to remember her childhood and reconnect with her country's past. Convinced that "mothers and soldiers are enemies of freedom" and that she is "doubly occupied,"⁴⁷ she defies her mother's orders and reflects on her childhood after crossing the checkpoint, a metaphor for the crossing of all boundaries, including that of time. Hence the child living in an occupied territory is confined within an ambivalent space, where, in Susan Stewart's phrase, "nostalgia is the repetition that mourns the inauthenticity of all repetitions and denies the repetition's capacity to define identity."⁴⁸ When observed from the perspective of a child migrant, desolate Palestine is presented not as a land shattered by war but as a landscape of distant towns, "each with a minaret that pointed to the sky like a pencil pointing to a page."⁴⁹ Ibtisam repaints destruction with innocence and hope, characteristics that children can ideally unearth at times of crisis. The older Ibtisam recalls how, driven by her childlike curiosity, she "watched [the Israeli soldiers], imitated them, puzzled over

their actions, and talked about them all the time” until they become “the source of [both her] anxiety and [her] entertainment.”⁵⁰ In watching the other so closely for the first time, Ibtisam deems herself visible in the eyes of her oppressor, thereby removing herself from the margins. Traversing occupied territory, Ibtisam, like the other migrant protagonists, is alienated from her own land. Socially excluded and existing in a state of suspension, she finds a way to re-integrate herself into her homeland, although these terms of inclusion have consequences for her sense of self. In any case, she manages to assert herself as a ‘potential active citizen’ by returning the gaze of the Israeli soldiers. *Tasting the Sky* thus provides a great depiction of how the child figure constructs identity in the face of exclusion and a shattered homeland.

Conclusion

As the narratives explored in this article illustrate, children’s literature can employ the indispensable perspectives of child migrants in order to portray them not as minorities but as potentially active citizens capable of replacing apathy with empathy. In choosing child narrators, these authors advocate for exploring issues beyond the repetitive, repressive aspects in children’s literature. In doing so, they depict the child’s intimate and self-assertive nature as a

As the narratives explored in this article illustrate, children’s literature can employ the indispensable perspectives of child migrants in order to portray them not as minorities but as potentially active citizens capable of replacing apathy with empathy. In choosing child narrators, these authors advocate for exploring issues beyond the repetitive, repressive aspects in children’s literature.

means to analyze representations of childhood and youth to help us overturn notions of power. Questions of belonging, agency, identity, and immigration are especially nuanced when discussed against the backdrop of children’s narratives. In presenting a literary analysis situated in transnational discourse, I have explored how these narratives utilize depictions of home(lessness), the child’s sense of self and nostalgia as instruments that subvert the representations of children as

‘passive, needy and indifferent’, replacing vulnerable duality with a sense of identity and home that does not have a fixed meaning. The disparate points of view are reconciled in these narratives, which assert that while nostalgia

tempts us, these children's narratives repeat the unrepeatable in the face of what Boym calls a "fear of untamable longing" and make us more empathetic toward the challenges raised by the claims and experiences of immigrants. I claim that while it is places that define our local definition of sites and spatial boundaries, the child's empathetic perspective in these narratives sheds light on how the 'immigrant' is a nuanced and political concept that does not have fixed or neutral meaning, but rather harbors various meanings depending on the context and point of departure. I conclude by suggesting that a multidimensional, transnational approach is necessary for the analysis of new conceptions of political belonging and the homeland. The 'transnational turn', which has offered literary critics new perspectives on texts by decentering ideas of nationhood, explores how texts are constructed through cultural exchanges across national boundaries. Is it possible, then, to return the children to us, to their homelands? Or is homelessness an inevitable byproduct of mobility and the crossing of borders? A stanza from Rudyard Kipling's poem "The Children's Song" offers insight from the child's perspective, addressing the adults:

Teach us to rule ourselves always,
Controlled and cleanly night and day;
That we may bring, if need arise,
No maimed or worthless sacrifice.⁵¹

This paper has attempted to show how children's narratives of different geographies and contextual backgrounds employ both affective images and the power of metaphorical language and imagery to portray the predicament of the child migrant who can never truly return home for the ones left behind or wait for the ones who cannot get out. Moreover, they showcase how literature for children portrays postcolonial discourse through the textual and visual from the imagined perspective of children, embodied subjects and historical agents. While mostly fictional accounts, the base structure of these narratives are neither fantasy nor fabrication. These narratives can serve as the sites where children come to terms with the complex concepts of immigration, belonging, and home, which reflect the universal along with the socio-economic and historic context for each country. In other words, adult figures can introduce children to works of literature as counter-examples that represent the range of cultural experiences and histories that make up the national and international communities that touch all of us. This is one aspect of postcolonial studies: breaking the hold of the great traditions that have

dominated the study of English literatures since the rise of English studies during the heyday of British imperialism.⁵² And break that hold we must, for in doing so, perhaps we can return 'home' to the children if not the other way around.

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BOOK REVIEW

Migration, Refugees and Human Security in the Mediterranean and MENA

By Marion Boulby and Kenneth Christie (eds.)

London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, 257 pages, ISBN 978-3-319-70774-7 / ISBN 978-3-319-70775-4 (e-book)

Migration is not a new phenomenon, as globalization through transformations in communication and transportation has led to movements of people and the widespread exchanges of goods and services for centuries. The most remarkable point within this period is the last two decades, in which the movement of forcibly displaced people and refugees has become more noticeable. Such movement is shaped by economic, social and cultural push and pull factors. Since 2010, the Arab uprisings in particular have sparked many political conflicts, instabilities and displacements of people in the Mediterranean and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Eventually, an immense migration combined with refugees fleeing conflict became concentrated in MENA. For the last 20 years, the MENA states have occupied the center of this migration movement: they are countries of origin, as well as destination and transit stations. Amid all of this mobility, today, the greater part of attention is paid to human security and human vulnerability related to the upsurge of refugees fleeing crises in the MENA states.

Migration, Refugees and Human Security in the Mediterranean and MENA provides both the theoretical basis and empirical content of migration practices within the geographical region of MENA. The theoretical framework is built on the concept of human security and from this point of view, the context is limited to the human security of migrants related to the states' policies and globalization. Thus the main subjects of discussion are globalization, migration, human security and migration policies. Considering the main concepts and the focus region of the book, the authors aim to answer three essential questions in regard to the human security crisis in MENA. The first question has to do with human security for the people affected by

the refugee crisis. The second question involves defining the push and pull factors of the migrants and refugees and determining the most vulnerable populations in the crisis. The third question aims to address how policies and interventions in the region are conducted at the national and international level.

The structure of the book is designed around three parts that are divided thematically into ten chapters. The first part of the book presents an enlightening theoretical explanation of the concept of human security as it applies to twenty-first century migration and refugees. Kenneth Christie's introductory chapter provides multiple points of view about migration by taking Europe as the refugees' destination, the Mediterranean as their transit route and the MENA states as the source of forced migration. This theoretical first part is supported by two other chapters that dwell on the concepts of the sovereignty of states and human security. In the second chapter, Nergis Canefe discusses the ad hoc policies of the Middle East states that attempt to manage forced migration, and tries to redefine sovereignty in terms of human security, especially highlighting the Syrian crisis. As for the contribution of Katleen Marion, this third chapter gives a global overview of the most vulnerable members of the refugee crisis—children and youth—in terms of human security, protection and international legal procedures.

The second part of the book focuses on case studies, which constitute the empirical framework of the volume. The authors elaborate mainly upon three different countries to enrich and strengthen the first part. Considering the fusion of the two first parts, it is highly valuable to find theory and practice together in a single volume.

Stephan D. Perham sheds light on the concept of the mitigation of forced displacement and the refugee and migration crisis with reference to Uganda's refugee-hosting model in the fourth chapter. The mitigation concept is widely considered in terms of cause and effect relationships in this chapter. The second country taken as a case study is examined by Julia Rutz; in her contribution to the volume, the fifth chapter seeks to understand the role of non-state actors in procuring human security in failing states where the state itself becomes a push factor for migration. Among the MENA states, Palestine is chosen as the case study because the role of non-state actors is more distinguishable where the deficiency of the official authorities is considerable. In the final chapter of the second part, Nur Köprülü seeks to understand the role of the international

community in relation to the concept of human security and the responsibility to protect related to the refugee crisis in Syria and Turkey. From this point of view, the author argues for the effectiveness of humanitarian intervention and the responsibility to protect in light of international practices and the United Nations charters.

It is significant to notice that this collected work isn't a mere combination of a theoretical framework and case studies. Instead, it is strengthened by remarks regarding the future of human security and migration in MENA in the third part. Considering the Syrian refugee crisis process over several years, in the seventh chapter Marion Boulby focuses on how the Jordan government's securitization policy defeats human security and instead generates perpetual challenges for Syrian refugees residing in Jordan. The author's multidimensional perspective contributes to eliminating the vulnerability of human security in the MENA region by proposing solutions. Another context regarding human security and migration is introduced in the eighth chapter by Robert James Hanlon; namely the strict nexus between human trafficking, smuggling, refugees and the private sector in the MENA region. Non-traditional business, hiring illegal workers and causing precarious working conditions threaten human security in the region, as do human trafficking and the flow of smuggling toward Europe from the MENA region. After asserting that this nexus will grow in the coming years, Hanlon presents three recommendations to the private sector to prevent human rights from becoming more fragile. Finally, in the ninth chapter, policy responses regarding the securitization of migration into the European Union as an international community are questioned by Rute Baptista. The author summarizes the actions of the European Union as too little and too late considering the measures taken in terms of the living conditions of the refugees and the gravity of the number of deaths certain to continue until the EU takes action. In this context, the author's reflection that the EU countries are more concerned with ensuring their border security and preventing asylum seekers from entering their countries than they are with prioritizing human security continues to manifest itself today.

This collected work is an important contribution to developing migration literature in its formal and contextual aspects. In terms of form, the methodological division of the book into three parts, which contain theoretical, empirical and future-oriented chapters respectively, is an integrated element of the book that makes it easy to read and follow. In terms of the context, starting from a single geography, the book covers various aspects of the region

in detail and presents the triangle of MENA, migration and human security in an enlightening way. To sum up, within the context of migration and human security, the goal of each chapter is to reveal the underlying factors of the human security and migration crisis and still, each chapter underlines the fact that the human security and migration crisis is due to some man-made factors, such as protectionist state policies, ineffective international responses and the persistence of violence. It seems inevitable that the diversity of this book will ensure its status as a qualified example for future studies in other regions where migration is intense.

Dila Algan Tezcan

Ph.D. Candidate
Marmara University
Department of Political Science and
International Relations

BOOK REVIEW

Turkey's Pivot to Eurasia: Geopolitics and Foreign Policy in a Changing World Order

By Emre Erşen and Seçkin Köstem (eds.)

London and New York: Routledge, 2019, 200 pages, ISBN: 978-0-367-08566-7 / 978-0-429-02306-4 (e-book)

In recent years, Eurasian states like Russia, China, India and Iran have become significant actors in world politics due to their increased capacity to influence the foreign policy of other countries in their region. More importantly, their geopolitical rivalry with the West has brought about a discussion regarding the emergence of a multipolar world order. In light of such significant geopolitical changes, Turkey, as an important regional power located at the center of the Eurasian landmass, has also sought to adjust its foreign policy preferences. Although Turkey mainly pursued a pro-Western foreign policy line during the Cold War era due to its military ties with NATO, it has endeavored to strengthen its political and economic relations with the Eurasian countries in the post-Cold War period—especially in the 2000s.

Turkey's Pivot to Eurasia, edited by Emre Erşen and Seçkin Köstem, focuses on the visible pivot to Eurasia in Turkish foreign policy with a particular emphasis on the changing world order and the Turkish geopolitical concerns that accompany it. The authors aim to analyze the reasons behind Turkey's pivot to Eurasia over the past decade, while also discussing whether Eurasianism as an ideology can be viewed as a reasonable option for Turkish foreign policy, especially after the emergence of a number of significant problems between Turkey and the West in the last few years. In addition to the two editors, contributors include Turkish and non-Turkish authors: Altay Atlı, Pavel K. Baev, Nicola P. Contessi, Pınar İpek, Mustafa Kutlay, Ketan Mehta, Tarık Oğuzlu, Harsh V. Pant, Gülriz Şen and Çağdaş Üngör.

The volume mainly focuses on the domestic changes in Turkey in the 2000s and their effect on Turkish foreign policy, while also elaborating on a number

of popular ideological currents such as Pan-Turkism, Neo-Ottomanism and Eurasianism. Although Eurasianism is defined mainly as a Russian intellectual movement in the introduction, Emre Erşen's chapter broadens this concept by focusing on a specific branch called "Turkish Eurasianism." As the author indicates, the way Eurasianism is used in Turkish politics not only refers to the post-Soviet region, but also involves Turkey's strengthened relations with other Eurasian actors such as China, India and Iran. Erşen also discusses the ideas of Russian intellectual Alexander Dugin and underlines the importance of Dugin and his personal networks in Turkey in the development of Turkish Eurasianism.

Turkey's Pivot to Eurasia also highlights the problems that have emerged in Turkey-U.S. relations in light of some recent developments in Turkish domestic politics. Tarık Oğuzlu, for instance, emphasizes the importance of the Gezi Park protests of 2013 and the failed coup attempt of July 2016 as two turning points in Turkey's relations with the U.S. He indicates that Turkey's interest in Eurasia is closely related to its disappointment with its Western allies in the post-July 2016 period. In this sense, it can be argued that the clash of interests between Turkey and the West is one of the major factors that prompted Turkey to try to soft-balance its traditional NATO allies by developing political and economic ties with Eurasian countries.

It seems that the rise of Russia and China in world politics in the 2000s has triggered a debate about the viability of the U.S.-led liberal world order. This trend has been accompanied by the rising popularity of charismatic leaders like Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping who sharply criticize the policies of the West, particularly the U.S. This might be regarded as one of the reasons for the increasing significance of Russia and China in Turkish foreign policy, especially after the emergence of a number of important conflicts in Turkey-U.S. relations (e.g. Syria).

Although the downing of a Russian fighter jet by Turkish military forces in 2015 briefly interrupted the Turkish-Russian rapprochement, the two countries managed to resume their cooperation soon enough. Pınar İpek emphasizes that the jet crisis demonstrated the critical importance of energy security in Turkish foreign policy. She argues that Turkey's rising demand for natural gas is one of the drivers of its pivot to Eurasia. In a similar vein, Çağdaş Üngör underlines the importance of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), popularly known as the New Silk Road. Üngör notes that Turkey largely benefits from Chinese credit thanks to

its participation in the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) initiative. One notable example is the newly opened Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway which is one of the projects closely related with the BRI. In short, Turkey's economic relations with the Eurasian countries have become more important, especially in the last few years.

One could argue that Turkey's stalled EU membership process has urged Ankara to strengthen its ties with other international organizations. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) for example has become much more important for Turkey in the last decade. Although Turkey has not officially abandoned its goal of becoming a full member of the EU, it has nonetheless upgraded its status within the SCO and acquired a "dialogue partner" status in this international organization which is mainly led by Russia and China. In addition, Turkey has continued its efforts to strengthen its ties with the Turkic states of the Caucasus and Central Asia within the framework of the Turkic Council as well as the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA).

There is a general consensus in the book that Turkish foreign policy has increasingly gravitated toward Eurasia in accordance with the changing global order. However, some of the contributors believe it will be difficult to sustain this trend in Turkish foreign policy in the longer term for a number of reasons. Köstem for instance claims that Turkey has a limited material capacity vis-à-vis Russia and China which might restrict Turkish influence over the Caucasus and Central Asia. Similarly, İpek argues that Turkey's asymmetric interdependence with three countries—Russia, Azerbaijan and Iran—in the energy sphere could prevent it from following a flexible foreign policy in the region. Baev believes that the development of Turkey's strategic relations with many Eurasian countries depends on the leaders of these countries, which makes bilateral relations quite personalized and politicized. He uses the fighter jet crisis as an example to show how Turkish-Russian relations rapidly deteriorated at that time due to Putin's tough personal stance against Turkey.

Some of the contributors, conversely, argue that the rapidly growing economic relations between Turkey and Eurasian countries could create room for Turkey to maneuver in foreign policy. For instance, Turkish-Indian economic relations have been developing remarkably in the last few years as a result of the efforts of both countries. It should be mentioned that Turkey's relations with India have always been complicated due to the close relations between Turkey and Pakistan. Nevertheless, Pant and Mehta argue that the

Justice and Development Party's (AK Party) vision for "seeking a greater role in international affairs" has resulted in the development of Turkey-India relations.

The chapters of the volume rely on a variety of primary and secondary sources including news, expert opinions and statistics. Atlı for instance uses data from the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Treasury and Finance, the Ministry of Development, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to demonstrate the development of Sino-Turkish economic relations. Although the chapters mostly use qualitative research methods, there are also significant quantitative data analyses in the chapters by Kutlay, İpek and Pant and Mehta. Contessi brings together three different international relations theories while explaining the changes in Turkish foreign policy. He tests the plausibility of Turkey's chances of joining the SCO through realist, neo-liberal and constructivist perspectives. Consequently, he finds that these perspectives provide different explanations for Turkey's motivation to improve its relations with the SCO. Finally, Kutlay's chapter discusses the concept of "new developmentalism" which mainly refers to state-capitalism in China's current economic model. He analyzes the dynamics of the interactions between China and other countries that challenge the U.S.-led liberal order and argues that new developmentalism has actually become quite attractive for developing countries in the last few years.

Overall, *Turkey's Pivot to Eurasia* is an important contribution to the academic literature on Turkish foreign policy. In addition to discussing the idea of Eurasianism from a Turkish perspective and analyzing the various aspects of Turkey's developing relations with the Eurasian countries in the past decade, it provides the readers with a general understanding of the domestic and international factors that have contributed to this interesting trend in Turkish foreign policy in the 2000s.

Furkan Emer

MA Student
Istanbul Şehir University
Department of Political Science and
International Relations

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Title of Book Reviews

Türk Basınında Dış Haberçilik (Foreign News Reporting in the Turkish Media), by M. Mücahit Küçükyl-maz and Hakan Çopur. Ankara: SETA, 2010, 168 pages, ISBN 9786054023073.



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