

ULUSLARARASIİLiŞKİLER

Akademik Dergi
Cilt 17, Sayı 68, 2020

INTERNATIONALRELATIONS

Academic Journal
Volume 17, Number 68, 2020

ULUSLARARASIİLiŞKİLER

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ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER / INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Cilt/Vol.17, Sayı/No.68, 2020

Special Issue/Özel Sayı

Revisiting Migration in International Relations

Uluslararası İlişkilerde Göçü Yeniden Değerlendirmek

Guest Editor/Misafir Editör

M. Murat Erdoğan

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From The Guest Editor

It is an interesting coincidence that the “Revisiting Migration in International Relations” special issue of the *Uluslararası İlişkiler* journal was published in 2021. Not only does 2021 mark the 70th anniversary of 1951 Geneva Convention, which identified the status of refugees, but it is also the 60th anniversary of the Turkey-German labour force agreement in 1961 as well as the 10th anniversary of the first arrival of Syrian refugees in Turkey in 2011. The number of Syrians fleeing their country now exceeds 6.6 million, and Turkey has been hosting the largest number of refugees in the world since 2014. Moreover, the effects of this phenomenon on Europe and the world, as well as global efforts to address this challenge have opened new paths both for academic literature and the international relations field to expand its inquiries. This development has also strikingly revealed the limits and dearth of secondary literature on migration.

When Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller published their classic 1993 study, *The Age of Migration*, the number of international migrants totalled 160 million, or roughly 2.8% of the world’s population. In 2020, when the sixth edition of the book was published, the number of international migrants exceeded 270 million, reaching nearly 3.5% of the world’s population. Developments in technology and transport, overwhelming welfare-order inequality, and the developed countries’ need for immigrants to meet labour shortages prompted what now looks like an inevitable increase in international human mobility.

The number of migrants that EU received from non-EU countries has exceeded 2 million per year in the recent years. This figure is expected to exceed 5 million per year in the coming years in line with ageing populations and decreased birth rates. Although migration is a requirement, the tension and conflict areas that emerge with migration escalate or “are escalated” intentionally. Most notably, the ethnic, religious or cultural properties of the refugee communities both create ghettoization and kindle populist, nativist politics in their arrival countries. These new forms of diasporas that are emerging, especially in Western countries, and the diaspora politics pursued by the countries of origin, which tend to differentiate from the interests of the destination countries, bring new aspects of power, security and international relations into play. Yet another significant aspect of the issue of migration in the Western societies is the acts of the faith-based terrorist organizations, which have grown more prominent following September 11, 2001 and are mostly associated with Muslim immigrants or those with migration origin, are continuing to shape domestic and international politics. The issue of migration as a political field per se and one associated with security may become a core, priority issue for destination countries, and spawn either top-down “securitization” or raise concerns from the host society that influence the politics of developed countries and ultimately shaping its politics.

Although the cross-border nature of migration marks a significant distinction from past waves of migration, the most significant distinction when considering the phenomenon of migration is whether it is forced or voluntary. The number of the victims of forced migration has surged in the past two decades. The number of refugees and asylum-seekers was 14 million in 2000, but rose to 30 million in 2020, while the number of internally displaced persons increased from 21 million to 43 million. Some

argue that one of the most serious global security threats in the post-Cold War period is uncontrolled human mobility. Journalist Marc Engelhardt talks about a “Refugee Revolution”¹ in his 2018 book, *Die Flüchtlingsrevolution*, pointing out a critical aspect of the subject, as he narrates the stories of those “who had to leave their country although they did not intend to do so”. Engelhardt also describes this human mobility as the continuation of the approach of the French Revolution known as the “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” (*Liberté, égalité, fraternité*).

In this respect, “the age of migration” has, in a sense, transformed into “the age of refugees”. The interesting point is that while the developed world opens its doors to immigrants, especially “qualified immigrants”, it shuts them tightly to those refugees who are the victims of forced migration and imposes externalization policies on them. We have perhaps grown inured to the fact that only 15% of global refugees make it to developed countries. One of the most significant security threats of the developed welfare countries, especially after the Cold War, has been non-state armed organizations and uncontrolled mass migration. Connections between migration, and especially refugees, with the politics, security and international relations are particularly strong and worth understanding more deeply.

One of the core elements, perhaps the first and foremost, that makes a state a state is its borders. Any cross-border movement, i.e. migration, is an area of politics per se. In this regard, cross-border migration, whether voluntary or forced, is not only the subject of social relations, but also the subject of politics, and of course international politics, more than anything else. Managing the flux of human mobility and the politics regarding existing immigrants, or those with migration history, is settling more and more into the core of international politics every passing day. However, although the subject of migration has become such an intense topic for international politics, the theoretical background of migration, and especially forced migration, in the literature remains deficient. One significant reason for this may be that the developed welfare countries, which are the source of the migration literature, are quite unfamiliar with the forced migration experience, and the number of refugees that they accept through resettlement is rather limited.

This special issue contains significant contributions from distinguished specialists of migration and international relations, who analyse new developmental trends on migration and politics, security, international organizations, social acceptance, cohesion, global perception of responsibility, diaspora politics, climate migration, and technology. Articles examine both the international framework of migration and its relation with security/securitization, as well as the key differences between voluntary and forced migration. Yet another notable aspect of this special edition is that it contributes to the development of new discourse, theories and analyses that criticize the approaches that have thus far failed to inform the discussions arising from the human mobility that has taken place over the last 10 years, thus bridging the gap between migration and international relations theories. It is evident that Turkey, which has hosted the largest number of refugees in the world since 2014, and is also engaging in obligatory cooperation as well as a conflict process with the EU on this issue, is playing a vital role.

The first article in this special edition, from Howard Duncan, is titled “Immigration policy as foreign policy”. The author argues that although the migration policies have taken centre stage in the literature of social sciences over the last 20 years, the foreign policy connection has not been efficiently or

1 Marc Engelhardt, *Sığınmacı Devrimi – Son Göç Dalgası Dünyayı Nasıl Tümüyle Değiştirdi?*, (*Die Flüchtlingsrevolution: Wie die neue Völkerwanderung die ganze Welt verändert*), trans. Ilknur Aka, Istanbul, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2020.

sufficiently analysed. The author examines the intricacy of the relationship between foreign policy and “national interest”, analysing the UN Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees within the framework of realist and idealist/liberal theories of international relations.

In the second article, “Migration as a Leverage Tool in International Relations: Turkey as a Case Study”, Ayhan Kaya evaluates the relationship between foreign policy and international migration in the case of Turkey by analysing the findings of three different Horizon-2020 research projects. The article explains how the international relations rhetoric and practices of the Justice and Development Party have instrumentalized migration in international relations in the last decade. The study focuses on the ways that some local and international variables affect the migration policy of Turkey and its relations with the EU and addresses the close connection between migration policies and foreign policy.

Tayyar Arı-Fatih Gökpınar’s article “Climate-Migration: A New Security Analysis within the Context of Green Theory” addresses the question of climate migration, which evidently comes to the fore from the perspective of global politics, by adopting an eco-centric approach, and argues that conventional international relations theories and practices fall short in discussing and analysing climate migration as a new global security issue. The study presents the views that the holistic perspective of the Green Political Theory, which puts ecology in the centre, would help us better understand the issues at hand than anthropocentric approaches.

Nihal Eminoğlu, Onur Unutulmaz and Gökay Özerim’s article “International Society and Its Institutions in Refugee Protection during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Revisiting the Solidarism/Pluralism Debate in English School” looks at the resilience or vulnerability of the international refugee protection regime in times of crisis, especially within the scope of the Covid-19 pandemic. The article particularly evaluates the efficiency of the concept of “international community” developed by the English School over its actors/institutions; in this respect, it studies the policies and practices of international organizations such as the UN, EU and Council of Europe. The study evaluates the theoretical framework and the field of practice alongside each other and gives critical clues about the ways that the international community manages or has failed to manage the global pandemic situation.

M. Murat ERDOĞAN’s article “Securitization from Society and Social Acceptance: Political Party Based Approaches in Turkey to Syrian Refugees” looks at how refugee policy reflects on foreign policy by examining the data of a quite comprehensive and representative research series on Syrian refugees. The author studies the arguments that “social acceptance” can be more determinant in cohesion processes than the decisions and practices of the state on one hand, and that the securitization approach often originates from “party follower voters” as a bottom-up phenomenon, in case of mass migration flows, on the other hand.

Zeynep Mercütek, Ela Gökalp Aras and Bezen Balamir Coşkun’s article “Turkey’s Response to Syrian Mass Migration: A Neoclassical Realist Analysis” scrutinizes the foreign policy aspects of forced migration, analysing the migration field in the arguments of International Relations theories and the reactions of Turkey towards Syrian refugees through the lens of neoclassical realist theory. They probe into the relationships between the relative power of Turkey and its foreign policy objectives, the mass migration of refugees with Syrian origin, and the contribution of the foreign policy aspect in the reactions of states to mass migration of refugees using the theories of international relations.

Hacı Halil Uslucan and Martina Sauer's article "Political participation and party preference among immigrants of Turkish origin in Germany" focuses on the diaspora concept, which constitutes an increasingly important aspect of the migration field and international relations. The authors examine the political participation of Turkish immigrants in Germany within a transnational context and analyse how the interests of these immigrants shape the politics of both Germany and Turkey and their political party preferences during elections held in both countries.

Kristin VandenBelt's article "A Call for a Unified Theoretical Approach to the Study of Migration: Network Analysis of International Migration Systems" points to the weak theoretical underpinnings of migration studies and suggests a new theoretical approach for the international migration systems, which the author calls "Network Analysis" and which can serve as a unifying theory for migration studies combining the best elements of network theory and migration systems. The author contends that the new theory will give the scholars the opportunity to develop convenient concepts and better identify key variables, not to mention foster more interdisciplinary work.

Sadık Giray and Ceren Kaya's article "The Role of Surveillance Technologies in the Securitization of the EU's Migration Policies and Border Management" presents a critical analysis of the role of surveillance technologies in the securitization of migration policies and the effect of such practices on the identity of the EU. The findings of this study make one think that the EU's securitization of migration policies with the new surveillance technologies might bear the risk of violating the norms and principles of its establishment.

Fatma Yilmaz-Elmas's article "EU's Global Actorness under Question: A Debate over the EU-Turkey Migration Deal" studies the relationship between the global actor role of the EU and migration management within the framework of 2016 EU-Turkey migration deal. The author presents a critical analysis of the current migration management process by interpreting the political dilemmas of the EU in its approach to the "safe third country", especially within the accession process based on 2016 deal.

"Revisiting Migration in international Relations" also includes two book reviews, in addition to the stimulating articles that make such a significant contribution to the literature. Deniz Yetkin Aker reviewed Valeria BELLO's book *International Migration and International Security: Why Prejudice Is a Global Security Threat* (2017) and Birgül Demirtaş analysed Bezen Balamir Coşkun and Selin Yıldız Nielsen's book entitled *Encounters in the Turkey-Syria Borderland* (2018).

We wish you pleasant reading.

M. Murat ERDOĞAN