Security Implications of Forced Migration and the Refugee Flows

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Abstract

This article analyzes the current migration and refugee flows and the security implications that it poses to the receiving as well as the transit countries. Recent public debates, underline the importance and concerns of the ever wider character of the mixed mass flow phenomena, followed by its implications in the humanitarian, economic, financial, social, political and security domain. It does so, by highlighting the concept of a broadened comprehensive security through the lens of the Copenhagen School. The broadened concept of comprehensive security provided by the aforementioned school, offers the most inclusive approach in analyzing the linkage between the *migration and security* nexus*.* The purpose of the paper is to present the point of interaction between the established rules of the receiving nations and the anarchic situation that migration and forced refugee flows may spur. The recent refugee flows into Europe brings to attention this very complex discourse, as it generates public debates which in turn call for extra ordinary institutional measures, namely by *securitizing migration.* The *securitization of migration* has significant implications for the analysis and the construction of national security policies at local and regional level.

Keywords: migration, security, securitization, comprehensive security, refugees

Introduction

Referring to the current concerns and debates in many countries in South east Europe and the wider region, migration has become a matter of high importance for domestic, regional and international politics. Its importance nowadays seeks the involvement and attention therein, not only of the specialized international organizations but also that of national government agencies such as defense, internal security and foreign policy. An attention of such kind brings to the forefront the need to address the relations of migration and refugee crisis as a matter of security and international politics.

The importance and concerns of the mass flow of migration and refugees ensued by the humanitarian, social, political and security implications emphasize the need of strengthening cooperation of relevant actors such as specialized international organization and also of national and regional bodies to counter with necessary measures the escalation of migration, forced refugee flows and illegal human trafficking.

The perception of immigration has developed alongside the rapid increase and expansion of issues of security analysis that to extent link immigration to the disruption of social life of a country as it is known. In relation to security and migration this has to do with the threats that have not been existent prior to the occurrence of mass flow of immigrants in the country. The traditional approach to security has focused primarily on military concerns and post cold war approach to security looks at a wider aspect of interaction, in those terms immigration also may cause a perceived threat to the security of a society or a state (Krause & Williams, 1996, p. 230)

Due to the ever widening concept of security in the post-cold war settings a number of issues that are not solely based on the military sector have expanded to include environment, poverty economic and political security, and international migration as security threats. In this way the comprehensive security analysis developed by Copenhagen school has moved

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away from the state centric approach to security, broadening its concept to include a number of issues that in a security discourse may pose a threat and hence it may need adoption of rules that will protect it from the perceived threat.

The essay emphasizes the theoretical approach to immigration as a security risk and also looks at measures that have been introduced in retaliation to the European refugee debate and concerns that have risen recently due to the mass flow of forced migration from the civil unrests in the Middle East. The following pages will investigate the claim that the perceived threat of mass flow of immigration from one region to another can culminate with extraordinary measures undertaken by various governments and agencies to ensure the political economic and national identity security of their citizens that are threatened in the case by the flow of immigrants in their country or the use of a specific country as a passage to another final destination.

Theoretical approach and migration security links.

Migration is a process that refers to the movement of people across jurisdictions, within state defined borders and outside of it. There are different types of migrants that may impact the established norms and rules differently. The process can be characterized as an entire system of interactions. Every element of this migration system requires specificity and unbundling. While most of the discourse on literature deals with immigration as movement of people there may be as well interconnection with identity of immigrants and the receiving society ((Interntional Organization for Migration).

For purposes of the analysis, we differentiate among attributes of the migrants, the motivation and volition of migrants, the transmission mechanisms for migration and the duration of mobility. The most useful categorization when dealing with security studies links migration to the status of immigrants in the receiving country. The migration and refugees accommodated by individual states can be of various kinds but we may mention the economic migration, political asylum seekers or forced migration. The concern here is mostly with the illegal and undocumented immigration or otherwise illegal immigration. Apart from the political debates regarding immigration the most illustrative concern of the governments and citizens is in fact undocumented and illegal immigration (Collier, 2014)

Migration therein presents a complex phenomenon that has to be understood in the context of flow of people beyond the manageable control of states as sole determinants of who can enter the country, under what conditions and through mechanisms that states put in place such as migration management control and border policing. These mechanisms are of course regulated under certain provisions of international law or human rights obligations. Beyond this, states have the ultimate right to determine who, when and under what condition may enter the country. Jointly, these features provide insights into why migration is perceived as threat sometimes and sometimes not. (International Council on Human Rights Policy, 2010).

In recent years international migration has made it to the forefront of the security debate and this due to the fact that we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of immigrants for various reasons. As the number of immigrants increased geopolitical situations have helped bring the immigration to the frontline of the security discourse especially with the end of cold war and the intensification of the globalization. These recent phenomena in global politics brought about to the forefront ideas of expanding the key features of security studies from those of traditional ones to include and broaden the scope of study to a range of topics. Therefore the discourse on security analysis was taking the security threats to a range of issues beyond traditional topics of military capabilities and political events to the new issues such as identity, economy and migration. (Waever, Buzan, Kelstrup, & Lemaitre, 1993).

The recent phenomenon of forced refugee flows and migration has brought to the forefront the importance and connection between migration and security. The connection between migration and security, however, is particularly challenging and problematic because migration, security and the linkage between the two are inherently subjective concepts and has come to the fore front especially within the debate of the broadening of the concept of security. The comprehensive concept of security developed by the Copenhagen school is the actual connection between the objectives and subjective in which the logic of anarchy may operate at different levels of security analysis and at different sectors of security (Choucri, 2002).

The contribution of the Copenhagen School to the security studies highlights the broadening of the concept of security into sectors to include besides military security, those of political, economic, environmental and societal security. These sectors are interconnected with each other that the threat to one sector may affect another sector therefore unbundling the chain

reaction that ultimately reflects on the security of the state. Most direct connection of migration to security largely to the fact that as migration may not affect directly the military security of the state it does so by affecting the social, economic, political and administrative institutions of a receiving state by weakening the strained capacities of society and therefore its stability and the ability to carry on the designed duties of governments. Hence migration initially may not pose direct military threat but it otherwise affects the capacity and established performance of social, economic and administrative institutions of a given state and therefore possibly over a longer period of time the stability of the society (Waever, Buzan, Kelstrup, & Lemaitre, 1993).

These sectors that in comprehensive security studies are viewed as security may be affected in process and condition by change in intensity and the flow of migration. As Choucri indicates the nature of migration and refugees may have different implications for different states and can therefore produce a different response. This structural calculus views security as a function of three interconnected imperatives that jointly yield one integrated and logical outcome. These imperatives cover the domains of:

1) Military capacity and defense

2) Modes of governance and regime performance

3) Structural conditions and environmental viability. (Choucri, 2002).

Thus recent history of migration and refugee flows illustrates the interacting complexity with the security of a given state or region and the implications that it brings. The threat of migration becomes evident essentially when comparing the relative number of migrants and refugees in relation to the absorptive and adoptive capacities of the given receptive society. Societal security that was introduced as a sector that needs to be securitized becomes in this regard the most affected and linked with migration as a threat to security. A state is secure to the extent that all dimensions or conditions for security are in place; and it is insecure to the extent that one or more conditions (or dimensions) of security are threatened or eroded (Waever, Buzan, Kelstrup, & Lemaitre, 1993, p. 45).

Furthermore as Copenhagen school includes in the security realm the sector of societal security it brings in the question of identity that refers to certain qualities and characteristics that a society shares. The identity question essentially makes the basic difference between the receiving society and the immigrants. Of course there are cases when positive perceptions prevail over the otherness and the perception of threat does not develop. However in other cases in an ethnically homogenous society an occurrence of preservation of the political and cultural identity can generate a perception of threat as it sees an influx of immigrants. The same anxiety of receiving society may occur over economic or financial resources.. In this regard when we consider the combined implications of affinity, employment, ethnicity and duration, the complexities abound, but so does the understanding of nuances shaped by matters of identify, groupness and other softer social variables that define the us versus them mindset. A point of entry into the security calculus takes place when we protect ourselves against them. (Weiner, 1993).

The complexity of interaction between the migration and security affects the mechanism in place to dealing with migration and forced mass refugees. In other words there are two main features of state structures directly relevant to migration and security. One pertains to the physical descriptors of the state that is size, demography, economic configuration, etc. and the other relates to modes of population status, citizenship laws, benefits and entitlements, rules of access regulating entry and exit (Choucri, 2002). These are mechanism and dynamics in place that respond to any given threat to the societal security. And in the case when perception of migration is changed into a threat to security it leads to a shift on how institutions respond to it. The broader context of securitization of migration comes into play and hence the subjective argument of migration become a threat to security in context of other securitization and takes the claim that migration is an issue that needs to be securitized.

Debates of policy makers provide additional impetus of political use of migration as a security issue. The Copenhagen school highlighted the usage of the migration issue to the domestic security discourse for purposes of policy makers. This segment of public discourse is the main feature of the need to undertake extraordinary measures for an issue such as migration to become securitized. The argument goes that statements of political actors have exasperated the public to make use of migration for domestic purposes and rise it into a security concern and hence place the public perceptions to

a stage that support the adaptation of measures that securitize migration. Few scholars such as Doty (1999), Huysmans (2000) link migration as security issue based on the public discourse of policy makers that eventually migration becomes a perceived threat to security and not a real one.

The very debate that exasperate the public opinion to accept the policies that deal in an extraordinary way with the issue at hand is the core change from a mere regular political issue into an security issue that becomes a real one as mechanism react to securitize the issue. In this regard security in traditional concepts has been viewed as a given threat that is imminent to the real world and the threat becomes the objective. Securitization theory places its focus on the speech act in a way that things are dramatized that they receive the political priority and attention and hence the issue needs a securitization. In this regard the public debate place an importance to the policy makers who in turn make decisions that requires complex measures to deal with the threat (Walters, 2010).

Introduced policies across EU and South Eastern Europe vis a vis the mass flow of migration.

In the above stated discussion we may rightly note that apart from the structural dimensions that migration presents a challenge to the security of a state or society, political developments of different kind add to the picture of the debate about migration and its effects on security. In the post-cold war era some political developments and events have helped raise the issue of migration into a security one. For example the events that led to 9/11and subsequent fear that terrorists may be moving within given territory and thus undertake an armed act that can threaten the security of a society further highlights the nexus of migration and security.

The recent events in Europe add to this debate and force the public opinion to a degree that challenges the policies of different countries on the issue. It becomes even more complicated as at times as it involves the concern over identity and therefore becomes perceived as a threat to particular cultural affinity and hence aggravates further the debate over the impact of migration. The debate already impacted the political landscape in many European countries as it has supported the increase in support for the right wing political forces that can further impact the and change the attitude and balance between the national security policies and human security that immigrants require. This attitude is important in retrospective as it has been implanted at the core of the regional organization that represents the European Union and mechanism that regulate the movement of people within its Schengen zone and the securitization of migration in a way impacts its founding concept that lies into a free movement of people (Wohlfeld).

The securitization of migration, especially irregular migration, poses significant consequences and hidden costs and creates a vicious cycle of supply and demand for security within Europe and the surrounding regions that are being used as transit routes for the mass flow of migrants. The recent surge in irregular migration and loss of human life make the issue particularly relevant. The current policies of the EU show how difficult it is to develop approaches that provide a balanced combination of national security and human security perspectives. Over the last years migration has become one of the most important segments of European relations with the outer world as well as within it. Migration has been termed as of strategic importance and on top priority touching on overall stability of the European structure, making the management of migration to be considered as a security matter needing coordination and cooperation processes at more levels and with more actors (Ceccorulli, 2009).

Thus, the objective of the European response up until now towards migration is following through the lenses of multilateralism and security governance. European Union is trying to have this two track response albeit many of its members meanwhile are opting for unilateral action by taking themselves outside the common policies brought about by the European institutions. The Mediterranean Sea is becoming one of the most militarized and heavily patrolled areas of the globe. Current events, such as the drownings of irregular migrants and the debate on the maritime operations on the Aegean see conducted by NATO expose the difficulty of the EU in framing the issue.

From the outset we have seen patterns of regional cooperation coming out not only of the receiving countries but also those that serve as transit routes. The south eastern European Countries have doubled their joint efforts to protect their concerns by dealing with migration in a way that facilitates their needs. As NATO has started to conduct reconnaissance, monitoring and surveillance of illegal migration, countries in the Balkan route have sent military forces to protect their borders from the illegal flow of migrants into their territory (Deutche Welle, 2016).

As far as these solutions appear to have taken shape they seem to be outside of the regular established procedures within the European Countries. The measures, envisioned to tackle problems of the receiving country likely to impact in a similar way on actors lying close to these countries. Moreover, as far as regional solutions appear to be sound to cope with risks and to coordinate responses within a defined cluster it would be normal to observe patterns of cooperation encompassing more regional units facing global or intra-regional threats. Thus, we may mention the recent debate of proposed agreement with Turkey that would allow the fast-track returns and large-scale returns that essentially means a collective expulsion of migrants which runs contrary to the European convention on Human rights. (Deutche Welle, 2016)

Conclusions

Migration refers to the process of movement of people across jurisdictions, within state defined borders and outside of them. The variety of migratory categories can impact the established rules and norms of transit and receiving countries in different ways. Forced refugee flows and migration once again has highlighted the importance and connection between migration and security.

Because migration, security and the linkage between the two are inherently subjective concepts and has come to the fore front especially within the debate of the broadening of the concept of security, however, the connection between migration and security is particularly challenging and problematic. The history of migration and refugee flows illustrates the interacting complexity with the security of a given state or region and the implications. The headline news about the phenomenon of forced refugee flows and migration has brought to light the importance and connection between migration and security.

The contribution of the Copenhagen School to the security studies highlights the broadening of the concept of security into sectors to include besides military security, those of political, economic, environmental and societal security. The Copenhagen school highlighted the usage of the migration issue to the domestic security discourse for purposes of policy makers. This segment of public discourse is the main feature of the need to undertake extraordinary measures for an issue such as migration to become securitized. The argument goes that statements of political actors have exasperated the public to make use of migration for domestic purposes and rise it into a security concern and hence place the public perceptions to a stage that support the adaptation of measures that securitize migration.

The complexity of interaction between the migration and security affects the mechanism in place to dealing with migration and forced mass refugees. The importance and concerns of the mass flow of migration and refugees ensued by the humanitarian, social, political and security implications emphasize the need to strengthening cooperation to counter with necessary measures the escalation of migration, forced refugee flows and illegal human trafficking.

In the above stated discussion we may rightly note that apart from the structural dimensions that migration presents a challenge to the security of a state or society, political developments of different kind add to the picture of the debate about migration and its effects on security. The recent refugee flows into Europe brings to attention this very complex discourse, as it generates public debates which in turn call for extra ordinary institutional measures, namely by securitizing migration.

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