

Book Review

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Security, Insecurity and Migration in Europe

by Gabriella Lazaridis (ed)

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In today's world it has become impossible to think of migration without also thinking of security. To some this may seem rational and healthy, to others regrettable, but one way or another it has become inevitable to think of the two as being somehow connected. The securitization of the migration debate and the ensuing policies that could be observed all over Europe have been strongly criticised, mainly because, paradoxically, this ever-closer nexus has resulted in a great level of insecurity, especially with regard to the migrant himself/herself. Structural change, such as technological innovation or the persistent economic and financial crisis, is not without influence on this debate, and research is needed to understand these changes.

Security, Insecurity and Migration in Europe combines sixteen chapters dealing with the connection between these three terms. Though the topic as such is not new, the edited volume is a very timely contribution insofar as individual chapters take into account many of the structural changes that potentially have an impact on migration and security. Gabriella Lazaridis has collected a dense compilation of essays on the topic including different country foci and drawing on a wide variety of disciplines (such as anthropology, political science, law, history and sociology) and research methods. The different chapters discuss to what extent immigrants are perceived as security threats (by media or politicians), but also to what extent these perceptions, once translated into policies, create a more insecure situation for immigrants themselves (including studies on different groups of immigrants, such as women or unaccompanied minors).

Most of the chapters in the volume focus on insecurity. Four of them are particularly noteworthy because they link insecurity to discourse analysis and thus provide a comprehensive analysis of one of the major underlying factors of insecurity. Togral shows in his contribution how discourses of essentialism and homogenization have made it possible for conservative and racist groups to build their arguments around the defence of 'our' values. Such narratives of threat have increasingly gained the status of 'truth' and have structured migration policies, which in turn have led to increased insecurity. Several other contributions pick up this line of argumentation by looking at more specific cases. Campani shows in her essay how a gender-approach can contribute to deconstructing the security rhetoric in political discourse. For that reason she analyses the multiple impacts on migrants that security-labeled policies have. By studying statistical data and the dominant discourse of the Italian political arena, Campani shows that the security-migration nexus has little if anything to do with the facts, but – in the Italian case – rather reconstructs 'an authoritarian and anti-democratic ideology that is embedded in the national-populist and fascist traditions' (p. 161). In an empirically very rich comparative study of Greece and France, Tsoukala comes to the conclusion that the social construction of a threat adheres to strict rational criteria that incorporate the vested interest and needs of the host society. The chapter by Krasteva nicely follows up on this through an even more narrowed focus on the French burqa debate, showing how the "visibilisation" of the invisible actually led to increasing insecurity for the women affected.

An entirely different but very timely aspect is analysed by both Koser and Likic-Broric, whose contributions address the link between insecurity and economic structure. Based on a large amount of data, Koser discusses the current economic and financial crisis and its potential impact on migration and security. While he himself concedes that evidence on the impact that the global and financial crisis has on international migration patterns is just emerging and consequently limited, the figures he provides do show a worrying pattern and constitute an excellent basis for future research. Likic-Broric addresses the link between insecurity and economy from a more historical perspective. His chapter provides an in-depth study on economic policy choices made by Central and Eastern European countries and the effect that neoliberal economic policies in combination with a securitized asylum *acquis* have on migrants' rights.

A further issue that is closely linked to the security-migration nexus is the impact of recent technological developments. Maguire contributes a praiseworthy, particularly innovative chapter on biometric security that does not follow the familiar line of normative argumentation, but calls instead for a more open, historically informed and comparative approach to the topic. He sets the standard himself by showing that the debate on biometrics is not at all new. Instead, it can be traced back to the nineteenth century where biometric identification emerged as part of a broader identity evolution (determining types of human beings) and soon became a tool for individual identification. He also demonstrates that the use of biometrics for security purposes can be traced back to the end of the nineteenth century. He ends by adding a comparative element to the study of contemporary biometric security, by looking at Ireland and Qatar (which he calls the 'test beds' of biometric citizenship). Maguire unravels the differences in cultural conditions that condition different states' options with regard to biometric security. Considering the technological progress made in this field, and taking into account national as well as European policy plans, it is unfortunate that this remains the only contribution linking technology to the migration-security nexus.

Overall, *Security, Insecurity and Migration in Europe* lays strong emphasis on insecurity, human security and the role of the individual in general. It thus reflects the change from a security notion focused on nation states to one focused on individuals. Most authors make it very clear that this change has not yet reached policy-makers. While it is important, even crucial, to stress the aspect of the individual, it is also unfortunate that only a few of the contributions address security and the state in perspective. Consequently, a drawback to this edited volume is that it barely goes beyond calling for a more rights-friendly approach. The book thus lacks a framework providing guidance on how to deal with the migration-security nexus in the future, both from a societal and an academic perspective. Neither the introduction nor the conclusion go beyond providing a summary of the chapters, and the different contributions, while convincingly pointing out that policy-makers are not (yet) willing to move from a national-focused security notion to an individual one, fall short of addressing possible approaches to overcome this imbalance, be it with regard to the current re-negotiation of the EU asylum *acquis* or national (non-) reactions.

Taken together, *Security, Insecurity and Migration in Europe* provides empirically rich analyses of the security-migration nexus, in particular the resulting insecurity for different actors in a variety of countries. The book's main strengths lie in the variety of disciplines and methods employed in respect of the topic. It will be a valuable reading for experts on the subject matter, but the novice reader will miss some overall structure and topical guidance. Both sets of readers will probably miss a concluding discussion on where to go from here. This question will have to be taken up by future research, for which the present volume provides very valuable impetus.

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