

11 Migration and Security

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A Border Patrol vehicle patrols the fence along the international border between San Diego, California and Tijuana, Mexico

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Introduction

This chapter examines the different ways in which migration and security affect each other. It starts by providing an overview of how migration relates to both state and individual security. It then examines the development of different research agendas and theoretical approaches to migration and security. It focuses on three questions that the literature on migration and security has tried to address: (1) how states employ migration in their security and foreign policy; (2) how violent conflicts diffuse via migration; and (3) when and how migration becomes a security issue. The chapter then takes up some emerging issues and controversies in

research on migration and security, focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic and questions of global health, migration, and security; the security impacts on migrants stemming from global authoritarianism; and important questions about the roles of racism, colonial histories, and global inequalities in shaping debates about migration and security. The chapter concludes by asking whether it is possible to reconcile “national” and “human” security approaches to migration, stressing the need for new and creative thinking that strikes a balance between the human needs for freedom of movement, social justice, and security.

Empirical Overview

Understanding the Relationship Between Migration and Security

Migration can affect security at different levels—individual, national, and global. A focus on these different levels has produced different frames or approaches to understanding migration and security. **Human security**¹ approaches tend to focus on how national migration systems and controls affect the wellbeing of individual migrants or potential migrants, whereas **national security** approaches to migration begin with national level policy-making and national interests. A global perspective emphasizes the importance of designing cooperative forms of migration management at the international level to ensure safe and orderly migration between states and across different regions of the world, and is addressed in Chapter 13 of this volume.

Migration, Security, and the State

The contemporary relationship between migration and security begins by acknowledging how modern nation-states control migration. National borders and border controls, passports, visas, and the modern administrative systems that have grown up around migration are all historical developments that emerged during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Torpey 2000; Salter 2003; Monghia 2018). In the current international system, states have the “monopoly over the legitimate means of movement” (Torpey 1998, 240). In other words, the ability of humans to move around the globe is formally regulated and controlled by the migration policies of individual nation-states—even if that control is imperfect in practice.

Over time, migration management and control have increasingly been seen as a key aspect of state sovereignty (Adamson 2006; Adamson and Tsourapas 2020) and as a marker of state capacity. States understand control over territorial borders as important to the national interest for a variety of reasons, such as asserting control over their populations, limiting access to labor markets and public goods, and maintaining internal

security. The loss of control over national borders can signal a loss of state capacity. For example, when states in Eastern Europe were unable to control their borders in 1989, this led to a sense of weakened state authority and legitimacy that contributed to regime change in central European countries, the fall of the Iron Curtain separating Eastern Bloc countries from Western countries, and the end of the Cold War (Weiner 1992, 91). In other cases, sudden and large migration inflows into states with low capacity may affect the core security and economic interests of states by, for example, creating conflict over scarce resources between established and incoming populations (Jacobsen 1996; Adamson 2006).

National borders have also come to play a symbolic role in contemporary politics and often become tied to issues of national identity and belonging. **Nationalism** is an ideology that suggests that there should be a strong connection between a collective group identity and a territory (Gellner 1983). It relies on the use of myths and symbols to produce feelings of individual psychological identification with a broader nation or political community (Bloom 1993). In this context, the physical borders of the state can take on a deeply symbolic meaning as also representing the boundaries of the nation or political community, and can become intertwined with questions of individual meaning and one's place in the world—or one's "ontological security." **Ontological security** refers to the sense of self-identity that is built up through narratives and stories on which people rely to create a sense of security that displaces deeper anxieties about existential questions, such as one's own mortality (Mitzen 2018a). Nationalist ideology relies on language that evokes powerful feelings and emotions, using symbolically-laden terms such as "home" and "homeland" that are then taken up by people to construct coherent narratives about their place in the world (Mitzen 2018b). When individuals identify strongly with images of the nation as a "home" and a "bordered container of the self," they may be particularly susceptible to political processes that create feelings of fear and insecurity around migration issues, such as processes of **securitization** (see below for additional details). The enduring strength of nationalism may help to explain why, despite an increase in levels of globalization in the world since the end of the Cold War, there has not been a weakening of territorial borders between states, but rather a transformation (Andreas 2003).

Although states have a monopoly over the legitimate means of movement, international migration has a varied impact on national security. As Adamson puts it, "migration flows can potentially help or hinder states' security interests" (2006, 167; see also Rudolph 2006). For example, migration may challenge a state's national identity if the state adopts ethnic-based criteria but may not detract from community cohesion if the state adopts a civic notion of national identity. Migration may also improve the state's ability to project power, through an increase

in economic activity, military manpower, technological innovations via high-skilled labor, and cultural skills in diplomacy.

Border controls and migration restriction measures are often justified as necessary to reduce the likelihood of violent conflict, such as preventing terrorism or other possible threats to national security (Bandyopadhyay and Sandler 2014). However, these efforts may also reduce a country's ability to project power in the international system as border controls may harm a country's economic interdependence and create negative environmental impacts without improving national security (Avdan 2019). The impact of migration on state security depends in large part on the ability of states to control their borders. State capacity is a crucial intervening variable in tempering the costs and benefits that immigration brings to the national interest.

Empirically, state control over migration has been increasing. Throughout the 1990s, both the US and Europe expanded the policing of their borders, increased the use of technology to monitor and regulate borders, and generally militarized and fortified their border crossings (Andreas 2000; Cornelius 2001). Border control rose precipitously in the US during the 1990s and, following the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York and Washington, DC, US immigration and border control agencies were reorganized to further emphasize security functions (Givens, Freeman, and Leal 2009). The main government office responsible for migration policy, the US Immigration and Naturalization Service, was moved to a newly created Department of Homeland Security in 2003, and reconstituted as three separate agencies—US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) (USCIS 2020).

In Europe, the 1990s saw a reduction of internal border controls between states in Europe via the expansion of the Schengen Area, a union of 26 countries in Europe in which national borders were effectively dismantled, allowing for freedom of movement between states. However, this process was accompanied by an expansion in the EU's external border control policy and the emergence of a "Fortress Europe," including the founding of Frontex, which has operated since 2005 as the EU's external border control agency and coast guard and later, in 2013, the establishment of Eurosur (the European Border Surveillance System). At the same time, European states have attempted to externalize border controls to states beyond Europe, with both member states and the EU entering into numerous migration control agreements with African and Middle Eastern states (Andreas and Snyder 2000; Andersson 2014; FitzGerald 2019). Elsewhere around the world, governments are building walls and fortifying national borders (Vallet 2014; Hassner and Wittenberg 2015). At the end of the Cold War in 1989, there were 15 walls or fences separating countries around the world but, by 2020, the number has grown to an estimated 77 border walls or fences (Hjelmgaard 2018).

Migration and Human Security

Migration often serves as a mechanism to enhance human security (UNDP 1994). Individuals may flee persecution, violence, and/or poverty to locations that provide greater social stability and improved economic opportunities. In fact, if international migration uniformly produced worse outcomes for migrants, international migration would diminish dramatically. However, the outcomes depend in significant part on the ability to move through regular, legal channels. If those opportunities diminish as a result of state policy, the rewards of migration in terms of human security may diminish or disappear altogether.

If borders serve to protect state security, from the perspective of human security, borders may also generate harm. For many people around the world—such as those fleeing violence or economic destitution—it is restrictive state migration policies and barriers to safe and orderly migration that generate a tension between state security and human security and create an immediate threat to migrants' personal and human security (Jones 2016). The militarization of the US border noted above has affected the human security of migrants; for example, the number of deaths at the US-Mexican border steadily increased during the decade of the 1990s, with approximately 1,700 deaths during the second half of the 1990s, including a 400 percent jump between 1996 and 2000 (Adamson 2006).

The International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Missing Migrant Project estimates that approximately 40,000 people have died around the world attempting to migrate across national borders between 2014 and 2020 (IOM 2020). This number does not include the countless deaths of those who may have tried to escape war or poverty and failed to do so, perishing before crossing an international border. Box 11.1 describes migrant deaths in the Mediterranean Sea. These deaths seem senseless, because many people move across national borders safely every year without any harm to their security. The difference is between those who travel safely with state authorization and those who have been unable to obtain authorization.

Box 11.1 Deaths in the Mediterranean

In late August 2015, a photo went viral. It showed the body of a small boy washed up on a beach in Turkey who drowned in the Mediterranean Sea when his family attempted to reach Greece by boat. The 3-year-old boy, Alan Kurdi, who was born in Syria, became a symbol of a tragedy that was unfolding in the Mediterranean—the deaths of thousands of people who have lost their lives trying to reach the shores of Europe. According to the IOM's Missing Migrants Project, approximately half of all those who have died or gone missing in attempts to migrate have been lost in the Mediterranean,

including almost 18,000 people between 2014 and 2018. One of the most publicized incidents was the 2013 shipwreck of a fishing boat carrying migrants off the Italian island of Lampedusa. The boat left from Libya, carrying migrants who had mostly come from the African states of Eritrea, Somalia, and Ghana. The boat caught fire after an attempt to signal for help and capsized, causing the deaths of more than 360 passengers, including a large number of children (*United Nations News* 2013; Yardley and Povoledo 2013; *BBC News* 2019; IOM 2020).

Those who do not die in attempts to move across state borders without authorization face the possibility of being apprehended, detained, or incarcerated by states. Annual global detention figures of migrants are difficult to come by, but they are likely to be in the millions. The US, for example, detained approximately 323,591 migrants in 2017; Mexico detained 179,335 migrants in 2019; and the UK detained 28,941 migrants in 2018 (Global Detention Project 2020). Moreover, states are often mandated and required to engage in migrant detention practices—the US Congress, for example, requires ICE to maintain a daily capacity of 34,000 immigration detention beds located across the more than 200 public and private prisons that are spread out across the country (Sinha 2016). The UK detains between 2,000 to 3,000 people at any single point in time. Australia’s “Pacific Solution” policy established offshore detention camps for asylum seekers in Nauru and Papua New Guinea with conditions so dire that they have been called a “crime against humanity” (Hamilton 2017). More broadly, migrant detention and deterrence have spread across the world as accepted state practices (Doty and Wheatley 2013; Meissner et al. 2013; Sampson and Mitchell 2013). In Europe and elsewhere, a fusion of government and private, humanitarian, and security interests have resulted in the emergence of an increasingly powerful migration control “industry” (Feldman 2011; Andersson 2014).

In addition to deaths at the border, detention, and confinement, migrants often experience everyday forms of insecurity and uncertainty. Many irregular migrants live “in the shadows” in states without citizenship, status, rights, protections, or access to health care, and are subject to exploitation via poor working conditions, low wages, and safety risks (Bosniak 2017). In addition to being exploited by employers, migrants can also be subject to exploitation by human traffickers or smugglers. People who are desperate to migrate may find that their only chance of escape is to turn to non-state actors who provide them a private service in an overly-regulated “marketplace” for migration in which the demand to migrate far exceeds the level of legally available routes and opportunities offered by states (Adamson 2006, 193; see also Chapter 3).

The nexus between national security, human security, and migration represents a challenge. National security may be threatened by some forms of migration, resulting in the implementation of border controls. But migrants' human security may be the victim of these border controls. In the "Continuing Issues" section, this tension is addressed in more detail.

Theoretical Evolution

This section focuses on three strands of research on migration and security. The first strand of research concerns the relationship between migration and the foreign and national security policies of states; the second looks at the relationship between migration and conflict diffusion; and the third examines how migration issues can become politicized through dynamics of securitization, or the process by which an issue is transformed from a "normal" policy issue into a security issue.

Migration and Foreign Policy

A country's migration policies are often heavily shaped by its foreign policy and security interests, and vice versa (Teitelbaum 1984). State migration policies are not simply the outcome of domestic interest groups and coalitions or ideology, but can also be a tool for states to maximize their national security interests in competition with each other as they interact in the international system (Rudolph 2006). For example, as a country built through migration, the US has a long history of instrumentalizing migration policy to enhance its security; migration has been used to strengthen its work force, increase its population, and bolster its military capabilities. In the early days of the Republic, the US government encouraged migration as a way to establish itself and to assert itself against competing European powers and pre-existing indigenous populations (Totten 2008). During the Civil War period, both Union and Confederate officials recruited immigrants in Europe to enroll in the two respective armies. Labor immigration also helped fill gaps in the US labor market during World Wars I and II. The recruitment of exile and émigré scientists from Europe during World War II was also a key factor in the development of a US nuclear program (Adamson 2006; Totten 2015a, 225ff).

Strategic interests continued to play an important role in shaping US immigration policy and extended to US refugee admissions policy in the twentieth century (Loescher and Scanlan 1986). For example, the US Refugee Relief Act of 1953 was "packaged to the public as a humanitarian gesture" but was more obviously motivated by US Cold War interests, since it was in large part intended to encourage defections from the USSR and "inflict a psychological blow on communism" (Rudolph 2006, 48; Totten 2008). The US has also selectively encouraged some forms of

immigration to the United States (such as from Cuba) for political reasons (Teitelbaum 1984).

Such strategies of using migration policies to pursue national strategic interests are not limited to the US. Egypt encouraged the emigration of teachers and other professionals during the 1950s and 1960s as a way of bolstering its power and influence in neighboring states in the Middle East (Tsourapas 2019). States can also “weaponize” migration flows or use the threat of population movements as a form of coercion vis-à-vis other states, as when Serbian President Slobodan Milošević threatened European states with refugee flows during the Balkan Wars in the 1990s, or when Turkey used refugee issues as a bargaining chip in its relationship with Europe in the 2010s (Greenhill 2010; 2016). The existence of labor migrants in states can also be used as a source of foreign policy influence, with migrant-receiving states sometimes using policies of migration restriction or displacement as a form of foreign policy leverage vis-à-vis migration-sending states (Tsourapas 2018). These can all be viewed as examples of “**migration diplomacy**”—or cases in which migration policy is used strategically by states in their relationship with other states as a means of furthering their foreign policy and security interests (Adamson and Tsourapas 2019).

Migration and Conflict Diffusion

The relationship between migration and violent conflict is multifaceted. Internal and international conflict may cause displacement across international borders—forced migration and refugee flows. But in some cases, conflict may spill across international borders through different channels, including through diaspora populations. Finally, external intervention may cause migration flows.

War and conflict around the world displace people across national borders, leading to the creation of refugee populations, which are major sources of forced migration in the world. Violent conflicts are not just a *cause* of forced migration, though; violent conflicts can also be spread or diffused across national borders via these same migration processes (Salehyan 2008). Within regions, cross-border refugee flows can contribute to the diffusion of conflicts across borders in several ways. A conflict can spread across borders if armed organizations or supply lines also cross borders with refugee populations, or if conflict actors are able to instrumentalize or exercise political control over refugee populations in ways that widen the scope of the violent conflict (Ruegger 2019; Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006).

Examples come from the 1994 Rwandan genocide, where an exodus of refugees to neighboring countries contributed to the destabilization of the entire Great Lakes region of Central Africa (Mills and Norton 2002). In some cases, rebel groups may operate within or take control of

refugee camps or use them as a base for the recruitment of refugees into armed conflict (Lischer 2005). The term “refugee warrior” has been used to describe highly politicized refugees who are both victims of violence, but also contribute to its perpetuation by taking up arms or supporting conflict (Zolberg, Suhrke, and Aguayo 1992). Indeed, violent conflicts are often characterized by repeated cycles of violence and displacement—forcibly displaced populations may well hold political grievances against the governments that have displaced them. These grievances can in turn be drawn upon by actors engaged in “long-distance” forms of political mobilization, thus further fueling a cycle of conflict and violence (Adamson 2004). Given these dynamics, it is unsurprising that members of conflict-generated diaspora populations might maintain an interest in the politics of their country of origin, including in cases of ongoing violent conflict.

Many violent conflicts around the world have been characterized by some involvement or support from transnational diaspora populations (Fair 2005; Lyons 2006; Koinova 2014; Cochrane 2015; Baser 2016). In conflicts in places as diverse as Northern Ireland, Kosovo, Turkey, Sri Lanka, and Eritrea, the combination of large-scale emigration and transnational mobilization by political entrepreneurs has meant that many “local” conflicts have a “global” dimension, with diaspora communities viewed by conflict actors as sources of external funding and political support (Byman et al. 2001; Adamson 2013). This is not a new dynamic. In the US in the 1970s and 1980s, for example, organizations close to the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA), an armed organization engaged in a conflict in Northern Ireland, maintained fundraising networks in Irish-American communities across the US (Zach 2019) until the conflict was resolved with the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. The activities of diaspora populations can sometimes make violent conflicts worse, but they can also contribute to resolving conflicts (Shain 2002; Smith and Stares 2007). For instance, the translocal ties that individuals maintain with their communities of origin after they migrate can be drawn upon later to support post-conflict peacebuilding and processes of transitional justice (Koinova and Karabegović 2017; Féron and LeFort 2018).

Finally, foreign policy actions of states can sometimes be a cause of migration—for example, military interventions in states may lead to refugee flows and migration crises (Teitelbaum 1984). The 2011 NATO intervention in Libya made the country a much less hospitable place for migrants, as it went from being an oil-rich destination for migrant workers from neighboring countries, to a hub for smuggling and irregular migration (Kuschminder 2020).

The Politicization of Migration: Securitization Approaches

Another important line of research involves understanding how migration becomes **securitized**, or perceived as a security problem or issue

(Bigo 2002; Huysmans 2006; Klotz 2018). Scholars have noted that there is often a disconnect between objective measures of the impact of migration on security, and the extent to which it becomes constructed as a security threat. When a policy issue is securitized—or constructed as a security threat—this heightens the importance of the issue in public debate and may be used to justify the use of extraordinary policies and measures.

Early research on the securitization of migration emphasized the concept of **societal insecurity** and analyzed how political elites could transform immigration into a security issue by framing it as a threat to collective social identity (Wæver et al. 1993). An important factor in whether migration becomes perceived as a security issue or not is the way in which migration stories are reported in the media (Bourbeau 2011), including the context and background provided in news stories about migration. In addition to the media and politicians, academics and scholars can also contribute to the securitization of migration through the way they write about the issue (see, e.g., Huntington 2004). The types of language or “speech acts” that are used to describe and portray migration have a strong effect on public perceptions of migration. When politicians or actors in the media describe migration as an “invasion,” as a “national emergency,” or a “crisis,” and portray migrants as “criminals” or “terrorists,” they are using language that either intentionally or unintentionally has the effect of creating a *perception* of threat.

Once a perception of threat is created, it becomes easier to enact extraordinary security policies. An illustration comes from the US. In January 2017, a series of White House Executive Orders placed restrictions on entry to the US from seven countries and banned resettlement of refugees from Syria. These Executive Orders were framed in security terms as protecting the US from terrorism, even though there had been no incidents of nationals from the seven banned countries harming US citizens in domestic terrorist attacks in the 40 years preceding the ban. Syrian refugees resettled in the US have also never carried out terrorist attacks on US soil. In fact, the chance of any American citizen dying in a terrorist attack committed by a refugee is incredibly low—about one in 3.6 billion (Mueller 2006; Nowrasteh 2016). For these and other reasons, the Executive Orders were widely criticized as being more about political theater than protecting the US from terrorism (Adamson 2017).

Fostering a perception of migration as a security issue can be motivated by a number of different factors. It can be employed as a political or electoral strategy to create fear in a population as a way of securing votes or support. Treating migration as a security issue also allows governments to maintain high levels of spending on security-related projects such as border fences, border control officers, and the various private industries that have emerged around border control and detention (Andersson 2014). Yet, once these political dynamics surrounding securitization are

identified, it is also possible to reverse the trend and promote the use of language around migration that fosters **desecuritization**.

Continuing Issues

New Avenues for Research

There are several emerging research agendas that speak directly to issues of migration, mobility, and security. One important area for research, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, is the relationship between migration, public health, and security. The local and international travel bans and restrictions on everyday mobility that emerged around COVID-19 have stimulated renewed interest in how migration intersects with health as a security issue. The COVID-19 crisis directed attention to past cases of countries employing restrictions on mobility and travel as a way of preventing the spread of infectious diseases and pandemics. These include historical cases such as the cholera pandemics in the nineteenth century, the 1918 influenza pandemic, the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the 1980s, the SARS pandemic of 2003, and the Ebola epidemic of 2014–2015 (Totten 2015b; Greenaway and Gushulak 2017).

The COVID-19 pandemic also draws attention to another emerging concern at the intersection of migration and security, which is how authoritarian states deal with migration and the impact on human and national security (Tsourapas 2020). The appearance of tracking and tracing mobile phone apps related to the coronavirus pandemic raises questions about government surveillance and the policing of mobility. Combined with the spread of global authoritarian practices and the new context of online and digital surveillance, there is increasing concern about states using technology and other means to monitor and track the activities of emigrants and diasporic populations abroad, including political dissidents and exiles, but also broader populations such as international students or labor migrants. The research on transnational repression shows that migrant and diaspora populations may sometimes have to contend with more than one source of insecurity—in some cases they may experience marginalization or exclusion within their new country of residence while also simultaneously coming under threat from afar by regimes or non-state actors threatening them from their countries of origin (Moss 2016; Adamson 2020). This suggests the need for a more transnational and global approach to questions of human rights and security, especially as they relate to migrants and refugees (Shenkkan et al. 2020).

Another important area of research is how questions of migration and security intersect with issues of racism and global racial and economic inequality, including the role that historical factors, such as colonial legacies, have played in shaping contemporary migration regimes. Some scholars have suggested that restrictive migration policies are a form of

global apartheid (Nevins 2008; Besteman 2019) in which the borders of countries in the “Global North” are racialized in ways that are designed to exclude migration from the “Global South.” Indeed, the politicization and securitization of migration issues are often accompanied by other forms of racial othering.

Increasingly, scholars are paying attention to the historical origins of contemporary migration regimes—including their roots in empire and colonialism and racial hierarchies that stem from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Klotz 2013; Monghia 2018). Placing current migration regimes in their historical context has the advantage of opening up new possibilities for imagining the relationship between the state, migration, and security. For example, the legal scholar E. Tendayi Achiume has argued that South-North migration can be viewed as a form of ongoing decolonization. Moving away from the idea that state sovereignty is about the control of borders and territory, she has argued for an alternative view of “sovereignty as interconnection,” in which citizens of the Global South should be understood to be “political insiders” to states in the Global North, meaning that “First World nation-states have no right to exclude Third World persons” (Achiume 2019, 1549, 1574). Similar arguments are made about the historical emergence of concepts such as “illegal migration” and how these relate to histories of racism and racialized othering, including the impact of such terms on the everyday security of people who cross borders or reside in countries without full legal status (De Genova 2002; Chomsky 2014).

Policy and Ethical Issues: Whose Security?

People have been migrating throughout human history, and millions of people move within and across national borders every day without being seen as threatening or dangerous. Yet, there are times when the movement of people across national borders becomes viewed as a threat to security. Why? In order to answer this question, it is important to think carefully about what the term “security” means and *whose* security is threatened. State efforts to control their borders can often lead to negative human security consequences, when people who try to move find themselves facing dangers such as the risk of death or incarceration.

National and human security approaches to migration are often treated as competing perspectives on migration and may appear to be in tension with each other. These tensions may come to the fore in debates about national migration and border control policies, or debates about related issues, such as how non-state and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should respond to state migration and border control policies. For example, organizations such as the Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS 2020) in the Mediterranean or No More Deaths (2020) in the United States have assisted tens of thousands of migrants, but have also

come under criticism for bypassing the policies of states by facilitating or encouraging irregular forms of migration and border crossing.

National and human security approaches to migration do not necessarily have to be in tension with each other, however. Expansive state migration policies, which provide adequate safe and legal channels for migration have the potential to enhance *both* national security *and* human security. For example, Germany's decision to open its doors to approximately 1.5 million refugees and migrants in 2015–2016 resulted in enhanced individual security for the admitted migrants and refugees, but also a range of benefits for the German state, including boosting its economy, providing an influx of young people to offset an aging population, and also providing many other diplomatic and reputational benefits to Germany (Witte and Beck 2019).

Ultimately, however, Germany's decision to open its borders was voluntary, and there is currently no binding enforcement mechanism at the international level to coordinate migration policies across different states. Despite attempts to devise a collective approach to migration and asylum issues within the EU, and at the international level via the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), and despite the existence of several international organizations tasked with governing migration, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), there is still no multilateral mechanism to coordinate policies that would guarantee the availability of safe, orderly, and legal migration routes across different states.

There are real questions as to whether current systems of state-led migration controls and border management practices are sustainable over the long term. Some have suggested that the geography of migration policy should be rethought and that cities and regions within states should be able to adopt their own migration policies, in order to allow for more local and regional flexibility (Bauböck 2019). Others have argued that the world would be much better off if open borders between countries were the norm (Caplan and Naik 2015), as discussed in Chapter 15. The modern system of territorial states is only one way of organizing the world, and throughout history there have been other types of social organization that have placed much greater emphasis on movement and mobility than on controlling borders.² As the world moves further into the twenty-first century, more creative thinking and policy-making around migration and borders will be needed to ensure a sustainable balance between freedom of movement, social justice, and security.

Summary

This chapter has examined the relationship between migration and security. It began with the centrality of the state in understanding current migration

management regimes, discussing the difference between national and human security approaches to migration. It then presented three areas of research on migration and security: (1) the relationship between migration and state foreign and security policies; (2) the relationship between migration and violent conflict; and (3) the ways in which migration can become politicized through processes of securitization. The chapter then discussed future directions for research on migration and security, including the relationship between migration, public health, and security; the implications of the rise in global authoritarianism for mobility and security; and an understanding of how debates on migration and security intersect with issues of race, global inequality, and colonial and other historical legacies. The chapter ended with a discussion of the ethical and policy dilemmas around migration and security, and suggested some possible ways for moving beyond national vs. human security approaches to migration in the future.

Discussion Questions

1. What is meant by “national” vs. “human” security approaches to migration? Are the two approaches reconcilable?
2. What are some of the main security challenges faced by individual migrants and refugees?
3. In what ways have states used migration as a tool of foreign and security policy?
4. Discuss an example of a conflict or war that has forced people to flee their homes and cross state borders. How have migration and security intersected in this conflict?
5. What does it mean to say that migration is “securitized”? Can you provide any examples of this dynamic?

Notes

1. For a generic discussion of the concept of human security, see UNDP (1994).
2. Examples include nomadic societies, such as the Bedouins in the Middle East, some native and indigenous societies, and the Romani people in Europe.

Recommended Reading

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