Globalization, Security, and Migration: The Case of Turkey

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The idea that intense processes of globalization force us to reframe the state-centric approach to the issue of security in the post–Cold War era is gaining currency in both academic and public discourse. The world is no longer marked by the sense of certainty, trust, and security modernity is supposed to provide in societal and international relations. From ethnic and religious cleansing to environmental hazards, a fundamental shift has occurred in the meaning and actors of security relations. And what Anthony Giddens terms "ontological uncertainty/insecurity" is becoming a constitutive element of life in the post–Cold War era. At a time when "writing security" involves not only interstate relations but also (and more important) identity, body, and ecology and when "the greater dangers and contingencies are global in character," there is a need to go beyond the state-centric approach and analyze critically the link between globalization and security. If processes of globalization have the potential to make the issue of security a complex, complicated, and multidimensional one whose ambiguous nature cannot be captured within the limits of interstate relations, we argue that attention should be paid to exploring various ways in which the link between globalization and security is constructed historically and discursively.

In this essay, we attempt to do so by focusing on migration as one of the significant sites at which the effects of globalization in framing security relations can be seen clearly. To the extent that "migration is both a result of global change, and a powerful force for further change in migrant-sending and receiving societies," it constitutes a crucial site at which one can see how processes of globalization make the discourse of security much more complex and multilayered. In other words, we could argue more specifically that the migration regimes of nation-states (largely framed by the state-centric logic of the Cold War) are becoming problematic and ineffective as migration flows in a globalizing world are becoming multilayered and not easily controlled by nation-states. Also in this context, migration can be seen as integral to the discourse of security with regard to the ways in which nation-states tend to deal with migration flows as a "security threat."
In this respect, Turkey provides an illustrative case in which the nation-state lacks an effective migration policy and treats migrants—especially those from the Southeast Asian and Middle East regions—as a security threat to its national integrity and territoriality. Turkey also constitutes an ideal case study to address the migration and security issues encountered in Europe because of Turkey's (1) high rate of emigration to Europe, (2) role as a producer of asylum seekers, and (3) experience with transit migration, carrying thousands of migrants from various parts of the world to Europe. These three aspects—Turkey's sending, receiving, and transiting roles in international migratory regimes—are essential in exploring the dynamics and mechanisms of the interrelationship among the issues of globalization, security, and migration.6

In this essay, we attempt to demonstrate the links among globalization, security, and migration. We focus on the Turkish case and show historically how Cold War political and economic interests dictated the country’s migration policies.7 We show in what ways the policies became ineffective in their response to multilayered migration flows and illustrate desirable policy options to render them more operative in a globalizing world in which security can no longer be conceived as restricted to interstate relations. In doing so, we argue that the restrictive policies of the (Turkish) nation-state in preventing multilayered migration flows are no longer effective in a globalizing world, insofar as they are framed by the logic of seeing migrants as an a priori threat to national security. The nation-state that seeks to deal effectively with the complex issue of migration should thus adapt itself, first, to the changing nature of global affairs (in which migration constitutes an important site of social change). Then, it should develop policies capable of coping with complexities involved in the multilayered nature of contemporary migration flows without codifying these flows as a security threat.

Understanding the Changing Nature of Migration in Turkey

Since the early 1980s, a radical shift has taken place in Turkey’s status in terms of international migration flows.8 In the post–World War II era, Turkey was a sending country, and its outward migration flow was organized primarily in economic terms. In the meantime, as a signatory of the 1951 Geneva Convention during the Cold War era, Turkey assumed legal obligation only for those people seeking asylum because of the so-called communist threat in Europe.9 Turkey accepted the convention with a geographical limitation: it would apply the convention only to those seeking asylum as a result of events in Europe (implying the events in communist countries). This limitation resulted from Turkish ratification and was not a
general feature of the convention. In Cold War logic, Turkey was a buffer state. Its decision to take part in the Geneva Convention, which recognized the possibility of migration flows only within the limited geographical space of Europe, did not alter its status from a sending country to a receiving one because the refugee flow from the Eastern bloc was very limited. Turkey did not consider itself a country of immigration; as a result, it never attempted to develop effective migration policies. The Geneva Convention and the state-centric Cold War logic dictated Turkey's position on migration, in which the possibility of becoming both a receiving and a transit country through non-European migration (refugee) flows was not taken seriously.

The flows of refugees, asylum seekers, and transit migrants into Turkey have drastically increased since the early 1980s. With no established asylum policy except the one marked by the Geneva Convention, Turkey finds itself facing a serious crisis. It is increasingly becoming a transit country to enter the West for a vast number of non-European refugees seeking asylum. The Iranian revolution, political turmoil in the Middle East, the end of the Cold War, the Gulf War, and Turkey's geographical location as a transit zone between the West and the rest all contributed as historical events and forces to turn Turkey into a de facto country of first asylum. Unprepared for the unprecedented mass influxes of people, especially from the Middle East, Turkey began to implement a new regulation on asylum seekers in November 1994 entitled Regulation on the Procedures and the Principles Related to Mass Influx and the Foreigners Arriving in Turkey or Requesting Residence Permits with the Intention of Seeking Asylum from a Third Country. Implementation of this regulation meant that Turkey recognized its changing status to that of a transit country and its need to go beyond the Geneva Convention to deal effectively with non-European asylum seekers. But such recognition was heavily framed by security concerns, which led to the a priori codification of asylum seekers as security threats. We elaborate on this later. The state-centric logic that defines the 1994 regulation has deepened rather than resolved the migration crisis.

The focus and subject of security in the world have begun to shift from state to identity as a result of political turmoil, so-called ethnic wars, and fundamentalist attempts to return to the origin by eliminating in bloody ways what is regarded as the other(s). In addition, the processes of globalization give rise to societal affairs that are increasingly interconnected through information and communication technologies. The crisis Turkey faces in terms of migration thus comes as no surprise. Deferring the crisis by treating asylum seekers as a security threat only accelerates the crisis, given that migration flows and people’s mobility seem to be growing in a globalized world. However, two points are worth noting here. First, the crisis is not limited to Turkey, insofar as a vast majority (80
percent) of asylum seekers and other transit migrants regard Turkey only as a transit country to enter the West. In this sense, the situation must be seen in a wider context. Second, it is in fact a crisis of state-centric logic that makes nation-states unable to create effective migration policies, especially with respect to migration flows that stem from identity-based conflicts.

Therefore, we need to situate the Turkish case in a world-historical context to see how the crisis the nation-state faces is embedded in the changing nature of societal affairs as a result of the processes of globalization. In other words, we suggest that globalization functions in a world-historical context as long as it plays an important role in the emergence of Turkey’s status as a transit country (in addition to its migrant-sending and migrant-receiving status). We argue both theoretically and empirically that Turkey’s changing status to a de facto country of asylum should be regarded as a “postnational social form” whose analysis requires thinking beyond the nation-state. To substantiate this argument, we first explain why taking globalization seriously makes a difference when dealing with Turkey’s migration crisis. Next, we show in a historical fashion the way in which this crisis has occurred. And finally, we suggest that the need exists to rethink the normative ground on which the nation-state approaches the issue of migration so that a “humane governance” for an effective migration regime can be created to meet the challenges of the globalizing world.

Migration as a Postnational Social Form in a Globalizing World

The present circumstances in which we live have been characterized as the “end of history,” the “emergence of the condition of postmodernity,” and the “increased radicalization of the consequences of modernity.” Whatever the characterization, the idea of globalization appears to be taken as the central factor in the construct. Each characterization operates with points of reference of a global nature. Thus, what is at stake here is that the increased globalization of societal affairs (although it renders problematic and untenable the equation of society with nation-state) forces us to take the linkages among the global, the national, and the local much more seriously than we did before. It has been suggested in this context that “the problem of modernity has been expanded to—in a sense subsumed by—the problem of globality. Many of the particular themes of modernity—fragmentation of life worlds, structural differentiation, cognitive and moral relativity, widening of experiential scope, and ephemerality—have been exacerbated in the process of globalization.”

Implied here is the idea that the intense processes of globalization have the potential to engender significant changes in the way in which
societal affairs are produced and reproduced. We observe these changes (1) in the form of production with the emergence of flexible accumulation, (2) in the erosion of the discourse of state sovereignty with the emergence of what David Held calls "the gaps" between nation and state, (3) in the intensification of time-space compression through communication and information technologies, and (4) in the emergence of overlapping cultures, crosscurrents, and crosswalks, which gives rise to the crisis of national identity. In all these areas, globalization amounts to the idea that it is no longer possible to think of modernity only with reference to the national and territorial constitution of societal affairs. Instead, it is necessary to take into account the global/local flows to understand and manage social change.

In this sense, taking seriously the idea of globalization means, first, coming to terms with the fact that the national level of analysis is not enough to deal effectively with societal problems, such as different forms of migration, whose conditions of existence are increasingly formed by the processes of globalization. Second, it means that globalization constitutes a world-historical context for both an analysis of changes in societal affairs and the creation of effective policies to manage and cope with those changes. Following Arjun Appadurai, we argue that to take globalization as a world-historical context is to "think ourselves beyond the nation," that is, to approach social change beyond the national level of analysis. At the same time, this suggests that to talk about globalization is to recognize the current crisis of the nation and to analyze societal affairs as postnational social forms. In this context, as we explore in detail, the increasing flow of people into Turkey in recent times and Turkey's changing status to a transit (or receiving) country should be considered a postnational social form whose analysis requires a theoretical and methodological effort to move beyond the national level of analysis and take the processes of globalization seriously.

It should be pointed out, however, that this move should not entail what James Rosenau calls "inevitabilism," which sees globalization as an unproblematic condition that affects societal affairs in a positive manner. Following Rosenau, we suggest that to take globalization seriously is not to celebrate it but to analyze it by recognizing that it is beset by contradictions, conflicts, and crises. Three points of clarification seem necessary. The first concerns the meaning attached to the term globalization, by which we mean the process of increasing interconnectedness between societies in which the intensification of social relations through the global/local nexus dismantles the national and territorial constitution of social action. In this way, a globalized world is one in which political, economic, cultural, and social events are more interconnected and also one in which they have more impact. To talk of globalization is therefore to see the nexus among nation, state, societal community, and territory breaking down in the following ways: (1) Globalization is in a general sense a
differentiating as well as homogenizing process. It pluralizes the world by recognizing the value of cultural niches and local abilities. (2) Significantly, it weakens the putative nexus between nation and state releasing absorbed ethnic minorities and allowing the reconstitution of nations across former state boundaries. (3) It brings the center to the periphery. Insofar as globalization is sourced in Western modernity it introduces possibilities for new ethnic identities to bring their cultures to the center. (4) Therefore, it also brings the periphery to the center. An obvious vehicle is the flow of economic migrants from relatively disadvantaged sectors of the globe to relatively advantaged ones.\textsuperscript{22} One could add different flows of migration, such as refugees, diasporas, and dislocated people.

These points indicate that the global/local nexus in a globalized world is increasingly replacing the nation/state nexus and is becoming a context for the constitution of societal affairs as postnational social forms. However, it would be a mistake to think of globalization as a neutral process. In other words, as a second point of clarification, globalization is beset by contradictions, clashes, and crises. As Martin Shaw argues, embedded in the processes of globalization are global crises (seen in a wide range of areas, from economics to environment) and also a set of clashes between the global and the local (which occur in various forms of identity politics, from ethnonationalism to religious fundamentalism).\textsuperscript{23} In this sense, to take globalization seriously as a context for social action is to see it both as crisis-ridden and as engendering new forms of power/domination relations. It is also in this sense that globalization makes security a multidimensional form of relationship whose scope ranges from state to identity.\textsuperscript{24}

This last point brings us to the third point of clarification about globalization, which concerns the crisis of agency. In this context, we suggest that this agency is the nation-state and that the crisis-ridden qualification of globalization manifests itself in the increasing disability of the nation-state to cope with societal problems that are global in nature and that require global solutions and a new thinking beyond the national level. It is here that migration becomes a point of illustration regarding how the nation-state faces crisis. Marcus J. Miller suggests that although national security concerns are legitimate and unavoidable in a globalized world, there is no reason to think of the national security/immigration nexus as having anti-immigrant overtones.\textsuperscript{25} There is no substantial reason to view migrants as a disturbing and destabilizing force and, therefore, as a security threat. However, to see this it is necessary to employ postnational thinking in dealing with immigrant flows, especially in a situation where the focus of security is no longer confined to interstate relations and where identity-based conflicts in the form of ethnonationalism and religious fundamentalism increasingly dictate the structure of global politics. It is here that the nation-state faces a crisis whose condition of existence is not confined to its
terrestrial national society but is marked by the processes of globalization. It is also here that, as Appadurai points out, discourse on immigration needs to be reconstructed by taking globalization seriously and approaching migration as a postnational social form, the regulation of which requires a new normative ground that does not codify migrants as a security threat in an a priori fashion.

Having approached theoretically the link between the processes of globalization and the changing nature of migration, we now turn to the Turkish case to demonstrate historically and empirically the way in which Turkey’s migration crisis has occurred since the early 1980s.

A New International Migration Regime in Turkey

As we indicated earlier, one thing that distinguishes the contemporary international migratory regime in Turkey from its predecessors is the significantly altered content of the migratory flows. Recent changes in the volume, direction, composition, and types of global human mobility reflect that international migratory flows to and from Turkey have tended not only to grow but also to contain a diversity of migrants of various migration status. The ongoing human mobility to and from Turkey has profound consequences for the main actors of migration (the sending state, the receiving state, and migrants) and for the politics of international migration regimes. Within this context, the high level of international migration through Turkey in recent decades has received much attention on national and international agendas. First, Turkey is a country of mass influxes. Almost a million refugees from Iraq, for example, entered the country in the years 1988–1990. Second, Turkey is a transit country for asylum seekers. Official figures indicate that almost 8 percent of asylum seekers to Europe have a transit pass through Turkey. Third, Turkey is a migrant- and refugee-producing country. Turkey ranked third among source countries for asylum seekers to Western Europe between 1985 and 1994, producing 9 percent (nearly 300,000) of the regions asylum applications. In the same period, Western Europe received more than 500,000 migrants overall from Turkey.

The context of our discussion is Turkey’s recently formed triple role in current global population flows—first as a receiving country, second as a transit country, and third as a sending country of long standing. Within it, we explore the ways in which Turkey has been integrated into the issue of migration versus security and how that issue has taken the form of politics of international migration. Our main concern is to examine the character of the changing dynamics in the globalizing world that have reshaped the international migratory regime of Turkey. Second, we answer the question of how these changes relate to the issue of security. Third, we demonstrate
how processes of globalization link migration issues to the question of security.

It is well documented that nearly 2.5 million foreign citizens—refugees, asylum seekers, and transit and undocumented (illegal) immigrants—have entered Turkey since the early 1980s. This figure is five times higher than the total number of foreigners who arrived during the period 1945–1980. The majority of migrants arriving in the post-1980 period have essentially been individuals and their family members escaping political persecution in the Middle East. In addition, growing numbers of economic migrants from various parts of the Middle East, Asia, and Africa have been trying to use Turkey as a transit zone to enter the developed countries. Since the late 1970s, nearly 1 million Iranians have entered Turkey with the intention of moving on to a third country. Between 1980 and 1995, approximately 650,000 Iraqi refugees, mostly Kurds, poured into Turkey. In 1989, more than 310,000 Bulgarian Turkish asylum seekers escaped the repressive Bulgarian regime. Approximately 30,000 Bosnians sought refuge in Turkey from 1992 to 1995, the majority of whom considered it as a country of temporary asylum. Nearly 20,000 Albanian refugees from Kosovo arrived in Turkey in 1999. Since the late 1980s, thousands of transit migrants—an estimated 30,000—have arrived from African and Asian countries such as Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, Afghanistan, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka.

Although in recent years there has been no mass exodus of refugees to Turkey, individual refugees, asylum seekers, and transit migrants continue to arrive. Faced with pressured borders and growing foreign populations in the country, Turkish government officials have often stated that their overriding concerns are related to maintaining security. The uncontrolled and even controlled movement of foreigners into the country has been seen as a security threat. For example, an interior ministry official said: “Our first consideration is the security of the country. As Turkish citizens, we live in an uncomfortable area. We have to consider the internal security of our country when implementing domestic laws and regulations. All our regulations respond to the logic of stabilizing the security of our country.” The official also emphasized the internal dimension of security issues, saying, “If there were no terrorist incidents in Turkey, then there would not be so much work to do.”

Of the millions of asylum seekers, refugees, and transit migrants who came to Turkey, few stayed in the country. Most Iranians migrated to a third country, although nearly 100,000 remain. A large proportion of Iraqis returned home, around 20,000 resettled in a third country, and a small number (around 10,000) are still in Turkey. Many Bosnians who came to Turkey with the intention of migrating to the West obtained refugee status in Western countries, and only a small proportion (nearly 3,000) are still staying with relatives and friends in Turkey. Nearly half of the over
300,000 Bulgarian Turks who came in 1989 returned to their homeland. Only around 1,000 Albanian refugees from Kosovo stayed in Turkey. Meanwhile, for many transit migrants from Africa and Asia, entry into Turkey was relatively easy, but departure for a third country is difficult. An estimated 5,000–10,000 Asian and African transit migrants, the majority with illegal status, continued to live in Turkey in the late 1990s. In particular, many Africans in Turkey have the feeling of being stuck in the country. Concerned about security, Turkish authorities often try to initiate programs for the voluntary return of these transit and undocumented migrants to their countries of origin.

The overemphasis on security, which is directly or indirectly articulated in the question of migration policies in general and asylum procedures in particular, is noticeable through the three identifiable categories of refugees in Turkey: convention, nonconvention, and national. This classification carries the legacy of the Cold War period, but it is still effective. The dominance of the security concern in this classification, as we elaborate later, has almost created another dimension of concern: the identity of refugees. Consequently, the policy response to the complexities of refugee flows into the country has taken the form of a politics of identity that includes the more relaxed inclusion of refugees of Turkish origin together with the rigid exclusion of any major massive flow of refugees of non-Turkish origin. In that sense, Turkey’s official refugee regime is a project that tries to deal with the problems of security and identity as they have been articulated into the refugee flows and refugees.

Convention refugees, as noted earlier, are persons who seek asylum as a result of events in Europe. Reflecting a Cold War understanding of the world and accepting the 1951 Geneva Convention with a geographical limitation, Turkey assumed to grant de jure refugee status only to individuals fleeing communist persecution in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The small numbers of convention refugees coming to Turkey had limited implications for security. Yet security-based concerns related to the convention refugee classification in Turkey are noticeable: for example, in the idea of controlling the refugee flow as the natural extension of anticommunist policy and in the view of limiting the size of flows with a narrow geography. Turkey granted refuge to convention asylum seekers with the understanding that recognized refugees would eventually be resettled in a third country, and indeed, most were resettled in the West.

Most refugees in the second group, nonconvention refugees, are from the Middle East, and a small number are from various parts of Asia and Africa. Turkey’s asylum policy defined by the 1951 Geneva Convention does not address the needs of these asylum seekers from outside Europe, and Turkish authorities often state that they have no obligation to recognize these refugees. They note, in addition, that the Law of Settlement in Turkey clearly prevents refugees who do not belong to the Turkish culture
from settling. As many refugees and asylum seekers started to arrive in Turkey from places outside Europe, several ad hoc arrangements came into practice. Accordingly, non-European individuals were allowed to apply for refugee status and seek resettlement through the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The established attitude of Turkish officials toward nonconvention asylum seekers has been deeply affected by the increasing numbers of arrivals in recent years. Officials have tended to take a stricter approach toward these asylum seekers, an approach codified in November 1994 when new legislation was introduced governing asylum in Turkey. We elaborate on the implications of that legislation later.

Iran and Iraq have been the two major source countries of the asylum seekers coming to Turkey under the category of nonconvention refugees. Security- and identity-based concerns, the main causal factors behind the 1994 legislation, became obvious in the cases of Iranian and Iraqi refugees. The refugee movement from Iran created a concern about the flow of Islamist activists into the country, where the secularist state sees political Islam as a vital danger to the security of the entire nation. Similarly, with the Kurdish ethnic conflict in southeast Anatolia, Turkish officials were reluctant to see any flow of Kurdish refugees from northern Iraq because of the concern that such a flow could add momentum to the separatist Kurdish movement in the country.

The third group of refugees in Turkey comprises persons of Turkish origin. According to the Law of Settlement, only those people who are of Turkish ethnic descent and Turkish culture are entitled to migrate, settle, and receive Turkish citizenship. A large proportion of persons of Turkish origin has therefore migrated to Turkey from Balkan countries and Central Asia, either because they have been expelled to Turkey or because they felt coerced to move to and settle in Turkey as a result of political, religious, and ethnic repression. Although generous policies regarding these refugees were present for a long time, growing concerns about various security issues have led to stricter regulations for admitting these national refugees. Officials feel that persons of Turkish origin should be encouraged to stay where they are. This approach, of course, can be seen as part of the double concern of security and identity: evaluating Turkish minority communities in other countries as a bargaining tool in various international issues.

When Turkey started to be more conscious about the growing flows of asylum seekers and refugees, as mentioned earlier, a new regulation governing asylum in Turkey was introduced on 30 November 1994. For the first time, government authorities began to screen refugee claims themselves rather than defer that task to UNHCR. Prior to this regulation, Turkey had adhered to an unwritten policy of pragmatism and flexibility that allowed UNHCR to decide on refugee status for non-European asylum seekers. It was understood that UNHCR would find resettlement places in
third countries for those persons determined to be refugees. In other words, Turkey informally granted non-European asylum seekers the right to reside in the country temporarily while their cases were considered by UNHCR. It was through the UNHCR assessment from 1987 to 1993, for example, that more than 15,000 non-European refugees in Turkey were resettled in third countries. In the same period, Turkey received nearly 95,000 non-European asylum seekers, whose status was often defined with the term temporary asylum because of the geographic limitation of the 1951 Geneva Convention excluding non-Europeans from its refugee obligations. Under the new regulation, recognition of a non-European as an asylum seeker by Turkish national authorities gives that person a temporary formal residence permit to determine refugee status and then seek third-country settlement. Meanwhile, what is obvious is that resettlement of non-European refugees outside Turkey appears of paramount concern. In other words, Turkish authorities are not comfortable with the uncontrolled movement of foreigners in the country or with their settlement, and the main concern is security. According to UNHCR statistics, the number of non-European asylum seekers who have applied to both UNHCR and the national authorities since the 1994 regulation became effective is around 17,000. Of these, fewer than 7,000—40 percent—were accepted.35

As we emphasized earlier, Turkish officials often say that Turkey has no obligation to recognize refugees from outside Europe, although almost all refugees to Turkey come from outside Europe. They note Turkey’s geographical reservation in the Geneva Convention to justify their position. Consequently, it is expected that nonconvention (that is, non-European) refugees must eventually leave the country. In recent years, officials in Turkey have become concerned that the country is becoming a buffer zone to prevent refugees from reaching Europe. They believe the growing instability in the region has created an environment conducive to mass movements of refugees. When this belief is coupled with Western European efforts to create a Fortress Europe, Turkish officials are convinced most European governments want to keep refugee problems regionalized and that they see Turkey as a buffer zone between Europe and an area with a long track record of generating major refugee movements. Turkish officials have often clearly expressed concern about how Turkey becomes a buffer-zone state of a Fortress Europe.

Parallel to Turkey’s new position in the international migration and asylum regimes, policy changes have also taken place in Europe. In the 1990s, the European Union (EU) took the lead in formulating a new migration and asylum regime. In the context of asylum, the agenda changed from a liberal regime implementing a selective but integrative policy of access and full-status recognition, with complete social rights and long-term settlement, to one that maximizes exclusion on entry and undermines status and rights with the perspective of a short stay.36 A comprehensive
approach prioritizes protection and action outside potential EU reception countries to settle potential asylum seekers as close to the region of origin as possible and in countries of transit. Such policies have been implemented through a readmission agreement and a safe third-country resolution. This process is likely to have a strong impact on migration from, to, and through Turkey.

The recent activation of migration pressure between Turkey and Europe further complicates the picture. From 1988 to 1995, more than 10 percent of nearly 2.5 million asylum seekers in Europe came from Turkey. Following those from the former Yugoslavia and Romania, Turkish citizens formed the third-largest group of asylum applicants in Europe. In the same period, nearly 2 percent of over 5.5 million voluntary economic migrants to Western Europe were Turkish citizens. Consequently, the arrival of large numbers of Turkish people with various claims and intentions has put considerable additional pressure on the immigration and refugee regimes of receiving countries in Europe. As the question of migration versus security becomes a hotly debated issue, many European countries increasingly view all requests for entry against the question of distinguishing between voluntary economic migrants and forced political refugees.

Because Turkey has long been a source of significant labor migration and undocumented migration, European immigration officials tend to be anxious about all population movement from Turkey. Thus, for example, when large numbers of people from Turkey began to apply for asylum in Europe in the 1980s and 1990s, they were often viewed suspiciously by the receiving countries and were often considered part of a mass attempt by Turks to enter European societies illegally in search of employment and social benefits. As many European countries realized, however, the rise of the so-called Kurdish Question in Turkey provided a self-evident background against which most asylum claims were considered genuine, requiring serious assessment and consequently demanding some assistance and protection.

A recent example of an asylum-seeking migratory flow from Turkey to Europe and its implication for security issues was the arrival by boat of around 2,000 illegal Turkish and Kurdish immigrants on the shores of Italy in late December 1997. Although Turkey claimed the exodus was made for economic reasons and did not occur as a result of the persecution of Kurds, Europe put heavy pressure on Turkey to find a solution to the ethnic Kurdish problem. In addition, many European countries imposed tightened controls on their borders to secure their lands from the influx of asylum seekers. Figures from UNHCR indicate that the movement of asylum seekers from or through Turkey to Europe remained significant in the late 1990s: in 1997, former Yugoslavia, Iraq, and Turkey were the top three countries from which asylum seekers to Europe originated. Considering that a vast majority of Iraqi asylum seekers passed through Turkey as a transit area on
their way to Europe, one can argue that the problem of migration does not concern Turkey alone but should be analyzed within a larger context of the European refugee regime of recent years.

Far from controlling the migrations, security policies in Turkey and Europe have strengthened the persistence of the ongoing migratory flows through a mixture of incompetence and ignorance of the complex relationship between the triple structure of the migratory process (sending state, receiving state, and migrants) and the globalizing world. Although we acknowledge this ignorance, we should also emphasize that European states (which conduct large political debates and exhibit considerable differences on migration and asylum policies) often argue that separate national policies are inadequate to deal with migration and asylum flows and that these flows need to be tackled on an EU-wide basis. While countries debate these new EU-wide arrangements, however, the old notion of nation-state rather than a new formulation of the state concept remains dominant. Overreliance on the old nation-state notion has led to security arrangements that are both counterproductive in their own right and a hindrance to efforts to achieve pragmatic solutions to unwanted consequences of human mobility in the globalized world. Turkey, as we illustrate in this context, presents an interesting case.

Conclusion

An important aspect of Turkey’s triple role—as a sending, receiving, and transiting country—in East-to-West and South-to-North migratory flows has been the attempt to develop a security concern that targets a growing level of control to limit the global mobility of people through the country. The combination of historical, political, and economic factors makes it difficult to limit migrations to or from Turkey. Nevertheless, pressure to address the severe manifestations of the consequences of international migration has led to an overemphasis on security as the primary concern resulting from human mobility. Some conclude, for example, that Turkey’s 1994 regulation should be seen as an effort by Turkish authorities to replace the previous practice, which they now consider too liberal and threatening to Turkish security, with one they believe will enhance their control over asylum in Turkey. However, the security concern and its practical applications have failed to limit the growing movement of asylum seekers, refugees, and transit and undocumented immigrants. It is not clear that the level of migratory flow to Turkey has fallen from the high point of the early 1990s, and most believe Turkey remains capable of drawing migrants of different kinds on the same or an even greater scale.

As happens in the case of many other nation-states, the emergence of a new migratory regime in Turkey highlights the contradiction between the
globalization process and the persistence of an abstract nation-state formation. Different types of migrations present the nation-state in Turkey with new challenges to experience various forms of change. This new mobility turbulence not only demonstrates the weakness of the state to control the multilayered flows of migration but also accelerates the state’s growing suspicion of such movement. Today, conventional approaches to migration are inappropriate, and classical geopolitics is invalid. For example, the long-established distinction between emigration and immigration is no longer appropriate as Turkey experiences a heavy flow of transit migration, and Turkey’s geographical limitation in the Geneva Convention fell out of fashion when the Cold War ended. Today, people can increasingly identify themselves with different nations and cultures and manage activities and loyalties beyond national borders. Thus, Kurds from Iraq and Turkey meet in Turkey but then seek asylum in Europe and start to live there; thousands of Turkish citizens become new citizens of many European countries, where they live for years; and many Africans come to Turkey with the intention of migrating to other countries but are stuck in Turkey and continue to live there.

With the process of globalization, the decline of territorial constraints does not mean the end of the state. Rather, it means a qualitative change of governance. Migration issues are therefore now the issues of new public policies rather than of the control of borders and space. In other words, recent migration issues become something more than a security debate; the security concern is often translated into the question of identity and citizenship. It is within this context, for example, that the Kurdish diaspora, carrying the legacy of a nationalist movement, has created a hot debate in the relationship between Turkey and Europe.

Considering the recent reactivation of the politics of globalization, migration, and security and the consequent complex configuration of those politics in any one state, the migration issue is no longer either a simple internal matter for a single state or movement across a single border. It impacts the states of both migrant-sending and migrant-receiving countries, the migrants and their families, and the international community and its representative bodies. If the nation-state is still considered important, both symbolically and practically; if globalization means the process of increasing interconnectedness between societies and is beset by contradictions, clashes, and crisis; if global restructuring generates or amplifies various types of migrations; and if it is no longer possible to think of security with reference only to the national and territorial constitution of societal affairs, then we can conclude that a crucial need exists to reconstruct the way we deal with migration flows. And such reconstruction should be based on new thinking that views migration as a postnational social form in a globalizing world, that sees migration flows as multilayered processes, and that forces the nation-state to come to terms with the complexities
involved in the issue of migration. We cannot cope with these complexities unless we break with our reductionist tendency to consider migrants an a priori national security threat.

Notes

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6. For a comprehensive discussion of Turkey's role in the international migratory regime, see the special issue of *Boğaziçi Journal* 10, nos. 1–2 (1996).
7. In considering these political and economic interests, these Turkish policies refer to both refugee and asylum-seeking regulations and arrangements of economic migration.


23. Shaw, *Global Society and International Relations*.

24. Bush and Keyman, "Identity-Based Conflict."

25. Miller, "International Migration and Security."


28. İçduyu, "Migration from Turkey to Western Europe"; İçduyu, "Refugee Pressure in Europe"; İçduyu, "Transit Migrants and Turkey."

29. Unless otherwise noted, the figures in this section are based on two sources: İçduyu, "Transit Migrants and Turkey," pp. 127–142; and International Organization for Migration, *Transit Migration in Turkey*, pp. 2–7.

30. Sönmez and Kirisci, "Movements of Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Illegal Immigrants into Turkey"; International Organization for Migration, *Transit Migration in Turkey*: Kirisci, "Is Turkey Lifting the Geographical Limitation?"


32. Frelick, "Barriers to Protection," p. 47.

33. Kirisci, "Refugees and Turkey Since 1945."


35. Figures cited here were calculated by the authors based on various UNHCR sources from Ankara, Turkey.


38. İçduyu, "Migration from Turkey to Western Europe"; İçduyu, "Refugee Pressure in Europe."

39. Ibid.