People are undoubtedly on the move, when one out of every 33 people in the world is an international migrant. Concurrently, nation-states are attempting to curb migration for security reasons. International migration is perceived, in some eyes, as an existential security threat in the post-Cold War era. This Handbook provides a state-of-the-art analysis of the critically important links between migration and security in a globalizing world.

This Handbook presents original contributions suggesting innovative and emerging frontiers in the study of the securitization of migration. Experts from different fields reflect on their respective conceptualizations of the migration–security nexus, and consider how an interdisciplinary and multifaceted dialogue can stimulate and enrich our understanding of the securitization of migration in the contemporary world.

This Handbook will aid students of migration studies to understand the comparative policies in creating and reproducing the migration–security nexus, and offer scholars and practitioners in migration studies a comprehensive understanding of a multitude of aspects of the securitization of migration. It will also appeal to academics, specialists and practitioners in the field of security studies who are keen to learn how migration has become securitized.

Philippe Bourbeau is in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge, UK.
Managing migration flows used to be the remit of government departments of the interior and labour. Now foreign offices, anti-terrorist agencies and ministries of defence are involved. What accounts for this dramatic process of securitization? In this pioneering book, the editor and contributors go beyond familiar post 9/11 narratives to untangle the theoretical, discursive, gendered and political aspects of the question. The authors cover topics like smuggling, trade, migration policies and health pandemics, doing so in a conceptually challenging and original way.

Robin Cohen, Emeritus Professor, University of Oxford, UK

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Handbook on Migration and Security

Edited by
Philippe Bourbeau
University of Cambridge
Contents

Migration and Security: Key debates and research agenda
Philippe Bourbeau

Part I
On the Importance of Migration and Security

1. Migration as a global phenomenon
Anthony M. Messina

2. Security and Migration: A conceptual exploration
Christopher S. Browning

Part II
Understanding the Securitisation of Migration

3. Immigration and the political economy of security: Is free trade the answer?
Christopher Rudolph

4. Gendered bodies in securitized migration regimes
Lauren Wilcox

5. Migration, exceptionalist security discourses, and practices
Philippe Bourbeau

6. Ethics and the securitization of migration: Reversing the current policy framework
Ricard Zapata-Barrero and Lorenzo Gabrielli

7. Securing the Urban Core: Policing poverty and migration in the neoliberal city
Dan Zuberi and Ariel Taylor

Part III
The Multiple Facets of the Securitisation of Migration

8. Families in detention in the United States
Roxanne Doty
9. Environmental refugees
   \textit{Gregory White}

10. Resilience, security, and spaces of migrant refuge
    \textit{Marianne Potvin and Diane E. Davis}

11. Governing migrant smuggling
    Anna Triandafyllidou

12. The normalisation of surveillance of movement in an era of reinforcing privacy standards
    \textit{Valsamis Mitsilegas and Niovi Vavoula}

13. Xenophobia, racism and the securitization of immigration
    \textit{Ariane Chebel d’Appollonia}

14. The politicisation and securitisation of migration in Western Europe: Public opinion, political parties and the immigration issue
    \textit{Pietro Castelli Gattinara and Laura Morales}

15. Media agents
    \textit{Alexander Caviedes}

16. Pandemics, Migration and Global Health Security
    \textit{Christina Greenaway and Brian D. Gushulak}

\textbf{Part IV}

\textbf{Global and regional dimension of the securitization of migration}

17. The role of international organizations in a securitized world
    \textit{Martin Geiger and Antoine Pécout}

18. Russia and Central Asia
    \textit{Mikhail A. Alexseev}

19. The changing frontiers of displacement in Latin America
    \textit{Robert Muggah}
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Migration and Security: Key debates and research agenda

Philippe Bourbeau, University of Cambridge, UK

People are undoubtedly on the move. The International Organisation for Migration estimated the number of international migrants worldwide at 214 million in 2013. One out of every thirty-three people in the world is an international migrant. At the same time, nation-states around the globe are cracking down on migration for security reasons. International migration is perceived, in some eyes, as an existential security threat in the post-Cold War era. The Handbook on Migration and Security provides a state-of-the-art analysis of the critically important links between migration and security in a globalising world.

This unique handbook has two objectives: first, to explore the growing diversity of approaches, paradigms, questions, and methods developed to study the migration-security nexus; second, to initiate a multidisciplinary dialogue about the ontological, epistemological, explanatory, and normative aspects of the links between migration and security in the social sciences and beyond. Drawing contributions from a wide range of international scholars, this volume examines how the securitisation of migration is studied across several disciplines and issue areas.

The Handbook presents new contributions suggesting innovative and emerging frontiers in the study of the securitisation of migration. Readers from different fields are invited to reflect on their respective conceptualisations of the migration-security nexus and to consider how an interdisciplinary and multifaceted dialogue can stimulate and enrich the understanding of the securitisation of migration in our contemporary world.

The book is divided into three parts. In Part I, we look at the importance of migration and security in our social world. Part II explores the various approaches and perspectives that scholars have developed over the years to understand and explain the securitisation of migration. Part III considers the many facets of the migration-security nexus and analyses the key contemporary and future debates on the securitisation of migration, including migrant detention centres, human smuggling, environmental refugees, public opinion, resilience, surveillance, media agents, pandemics, and xenophobia. Finally, Part IV looks at how the securitisation of migration is unfolding in different regions of the world.

Part I

The first part examines the “Importance of Migration and Security.” The two chapters in this section cover some of the conceptual boundaries and key issues surrounding the concepts of migration and security.

Chapter 1, “Migration as a global phenomenon” by Anthony Messina, highlights the current dynamics of world migration: its sheer numbers, its spatial distribution, and some of the contemporary pathways revealed in the movements of people. Messina distinguishes among four major migration streams: labour immigration, secondary
immigration (which largely referred to family reunification), forced immigration (or humanitarian immigration, which includes asylum seekers and refugees), and irregular immigration (see also Messina 2007, 2014). We see how each of the four major migration streams not only has benefits and shortfalls, but also attests to the truly “global” nature of migration. Distinguishing among these four streams allows Messina to differentially analyse the securitisation of migration; in particular, he contends that labour immigration tends to be viewed relatively positively, secondary immigration is seen as having serious consequences for the social cohesion of a given society, humanitarian immigration is increasingly viewed with suspicion, and irregular immigration is perceived to be the greatest security threat. In providing this overview, Messina offers a nuanced and rich understanding of migration as a global phenomenon.

Chapter 2, “Security and Migration: A conceptual exploration” by Christopher Browning uses Donald Trump’s numerous inflammatory statements as a launching pad to discuss the latest scholarship on the important issue of the meanings and processes of security. Browning centres his chapter around four crucial questions in security studies — ‘whose security’, ‘what security entails’, ‘what is the threat’ and ‘how is security to be achieved’ — to argue that the meanings and reference objects of security (i.e., the things that need to be protected) are elusive, contested, and politically framed (see also Browning 2013, Browning and McDonald 2013). From this perspective, Browning underscores that, depending on where you sit (that is, whose security you are talking about), migration can be viewed as having security benefits. His main takeaway is that linking together migration and security does not necessarily describe a given situation (e.g., migration is securitized); rather, this linkage is constitutive of the collective understanding of what security is, and of how to deal with these security ‘threats’.

Part II

The second part of the handbook focuses on perspectives scholars have developed over the years to understand and explain the process of securitising migration. The five chapters in this section discuss, respectively, the political economy, gender, the discourse/practice interface, normativity, and urban poverty.

In Chapter 3, Christopher Rudolph focuses on the political economy dimension of securitising migration. The management of international migration is indeed an important issue in the migration literature, and Rudolph demonstrates convincingly how the tension between interests favouring openness of the border to migrants and interests preferring closure presents policymakers with a unique and significant challenge (Rudolph 2006, 2003). Starting with Robert Mundell’s substitution theorem, Rudolph guides the reader toward a critical analysis of the substitution between trade and migration flows from a multidisciplinary perspective. For Rudolph, the substitution between trade and migration flows is likely to operate only under very limited circumstances. Furthermore, several factors make substitution unlikely in real-world contexts, including capital flows, the migrant agency and its associated networks, the dynamics of third-party state systems, and service-trade dynamics. In short, Rudolph finds little evidence to support Mundell’s substitution theorem. Rudolph concludes by arguing that his interdisciplinary perspective on the question of
the relationship between trade and migration underscores the lack of any “magic bullet” answers to international migration policy challenges.

In Chapter 4, Lauren Wilcox critically examines the role of gender in contemporary securitised migration regimes. She highlights how current security discourses and practices regarding migration are built upon the transparency of the human body, especially the notion of ‘body in movement’. From this perspective, Wilcox argues that migration regimes are a site for the regulation of gender: what counts as ‘normal’ embodiment is determined by biometric devices and associated practices. She contends that feminist analyses of international migration have demonstrated that the very possibility of moving across borders is deeply related to how one’s body is gendered and sexualised (Wilcox 2015, Wilcox 2009). For example, because most employees operating body scanners at airports are trained to seek out ‘anomalies’ in bodies (i.e. a disconnect between a person’s gender presentation and sexed embodiment), airport security practices often out trans- and gender-non-conforming people, constituting them as potential security threats. Furthermore, Wilcox underscores that migration regimes, by regulating gender and the body, transform non-heterosexuality and trans-identities into categories themselves. She points out that LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-, queer or other non-normative sexual and gender minorities) asylum seekers and undocumented populations are at particular risk of state violence, including detention and deportation.

In Chapter 5, Philippe Bourbeau discusses the securitisation process, i.e. the process of integrating an issue into security frameworks that emphasize policing and defence (Bourbeau 2011, 2013). He highlights that, as currently organized, the literature on securitization rests mainly on two logics: the logic of exception (discourse) and the logic of routine (practice). For some scholars, these two approaches to the study of the securitization process form a battleground on which to fight out differences between structural, cultural, critical, and sociological approaches. But while many graduate students cut their theoretical teeth on these debates, Bourbeau contends that little has been gained in the race for possession of the field. The gist of Bourbeau’s set of arguments is that, when taken alone, neither logic presents a convincing framework for the study of the securitization process. Rather than developing a comprehensive theory or a full-fledged synthesis of the securitization process, the chapter strives to recognize and to harness the strengths of both logics, and to identify fruitful theoretical foundations or ‘bricks’ (Bourbeau 2014, 2015). To this end, the chapter lays out two main conceptual elements – performance and path dependence – and proposes a contiguum approach. An analysis of the social construction of migration as a security threat in France since the end of the Cold War illustrates the argument.

In Chapter 6, Ricard Zapata-Barrero and Lorenzo Gabrielli focus on the ethical dimension of migration, arguing that the security-insecurity dichotomy resides at the core of the current debate. Starting from the position that the security narrative is increasingly de-territorialised, they seek to problematise the rather traditional link between security and restrictive migration policies, noting that security itself could be an argument for less restrictive migration policies. The security narrative need not abandoned, Zapata-Barrero and Gabrielli (2013, 2012) tell us, although it must be considerably modified. The authors propose to expand the scope of the security narrative by developing a multidimensional framework that would take into consideration the security prerogatives of destination and origin states as well as
transit states and migrants themselves. They contend that such a multidimensional approach is rather timely and important given the current European context.

In Chapter 7, Dan Zuberi and Ariel Taylor adopt an urban-poverty perspective, asking, ‘how are security and order produced?’ and ‘who or what purpose does the securitisation of migration serve?’ They examine the effects of global neoliberal restructuring on the regulation of socio-spatial demographic patterns in two of Canada’s largest and fastest-growing cities and catalogue the consequences of this restructuring for migrants. Building on critical literature in urban planning and gentrification studies, Zuberi and Taylor detail the evolution of twentieth century urban renewal policies and underscore that these policies have not only deeply influenced neoliberal urbanism in the twenty-first century, but have also spurred the securitisation of social-spatial inequality (Zuberi 2006, 2011). They argue that security is an important factor in determining how migration and poverty are constituted within neoliberal urban governance. The transformation of neighbourhoods and public spaces makes a narrow space of urbanity safe for marketability and flows of capital while creating insecurity for large segments of a city’s most vulnerable population.

**Part III**

The third part of the handbook examines various facets of the migration-security nexus. Eight chapters investigate key contemporary debates, including detention, environmental refugees, resilience, human smuggling, surveillance, and pandemics.

Roxanne Doty focuses in Chapter 8 on the United States immigration detention system, particularly family detention. She traces the multiple US programmes of immigration enforcement and details the increase in immigrant detention centres throughout the country, while paying special attention to the role of private corporations in running these detention centres (Doty 2009, 2007). Doty identifies the arrival of the ‘border kids’—tens of thousands of unaccompanied children who crossed the Mexican border into the United States during the summer of 2014—as the event that precipitated the recent surge in family detention in the US, and then describes the ensuing governmental policy reaction. Her main argument is that the current US immigration detention system should be seen as an example of structural violence and cruelty.

In Chapter 9, Gregory White tackles the idea of environmental refugees. He points out that, while the concept of “environmental refugees” initially applied to any persons dislodged by ecological change, it has been narrowed in recent years to refer to people forcibly displaced because of the present-or-future impacts of climate change. Analysing the evolution of discourses regarding environmental refugees in recent decades, White underscores that, in many ways, environmental refugees have become the ‘human face of climate change’ (2011, 2007). Yet, at the same time, White reminds us of the problematic uses (and thus effects) of the label ‘environmental refugees’ by security-oriented professionals, who seek to create a simplistic and apocalyptic understanding of the phenomenon. Environmental refugees, argues White, need to be taken out of the security realm via rigorous and comprehensive empirical studies of the phenomenon. White’s key message is unequivocal:
environmental refugees will be an important issue in the not-so-distant future and ‘we’d better prepare’.

In Chapter 10, Marianne Potvin and Diane Davis examine the link between migration and security through the lens of resilience. They suggest that resilience represents a new paradigm for rethinking and redefining the security-migration nexus. By tracing the expansion and transformation of refugee settlements around the world, Potvin and Davis argue that, to the extent that refugee camps are designed to provide legal and physical protection and that they do reduce some of the vulnerabilities caused by forced migration, they enhance community resilience. Yet, refugee camps also act as amplifiers of violence and bearers of various forms of exclusion and suffering, and as such, these camps exemplify negative resilience (Davis 2012, 2005). Potvin and Davis illustrate their argument through a discussion of the methods adopted by Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq to deal with the massive influx of refugees brought on by the unfolding Syrian refugee crisis.

In Chapter 11, Anna Triandafyllidou addresses the issue of human smuggling. In exploring why smuggling has emerged as an important phenomenon in contemporary world affairs, the author argues strongly that undocumented migration is a structural feature of modern society rather than an exception or even a social pathology (Triandafyllidou and Maroukis 2012, Triandafyllidou 2016). Relying on the literature on irregular migration systems and transnational governance networks, Triandafyllidou contends that we are observing the emergence of a transnational security governance framework that understands smuggling as an illegal and criminal activity. Such a security governance framework is problematic, remarks Triandafyllidou, mainly because it neglects the wider social roots of smuggling in origin and transit countries. As a corrective, she proposes to understand human smuggling as a complex socio-economic process. Triandafyllidou’s approach permits complex analysis of the multiple facets of human smuggling, including its economic/business aspects, the relationship between trust and power in the process, and the social contexts and local realities in which smuggling take place.

Valsamis Mitsilegas and Niovi Vavoula discuss in Chapter 12 the normalisation of surveillance, focusing in particular on large-scale information systems in the European Union and their relationship with human rights considerations. Mitsilegas and Vavoula map the processes by which these surveillance instruments are set up and describe their operation practices, making sure to emphasize the right to private life throughout their discussion. They divide the evolution of the EU surveillance system into three waves: (1) the setting up of large centralised databases aimed at monitoring and controlling migration; (2) the transformation of the monitoring system from a reporting tool to an investigative tool following the terrorist attacks of September 2001; (3) the focus of surveillance on the movement of third-country nationals (Mitsilegas 2014, 2009). Tracing the evolution of EU surveillance instruments allows Mitsilegas and Vavoula to shed new light on the surveillance of EU citizens’ movement through the establishment of the EU Passenger Name Records system.

In Chapter 13, Ariane Chebel d’Appollonia explores the link between migration, security and xenophobia. Starting from the contention that we are observing a gradual convergence of immigration and counterterrorism policies between the United States
and the European Union, she identifies three important trends: (1) a significant increase in the impact of symbolic threats and (2) a worrying surge of new forms of xenophobia towards refugees, leading to (3) a diffusion of security-driven racism. Showing how public discourse on immigration in the US as well as in the EU is premised on a differentiation of the Other on the basis of ethnic origin, religious beliefs or physical appearance, Chebel d’Appollonia (2012, 2008) argues that traditional distinctions across different types of immigrants (e.g., legal-illegal) are topped by an ‘ethno-religious appreciation of insecurity’; racist misperceptions found on both sides of the Atlantic have led to the securitisation of racial identities.

Pietro Castelli Gattinara and Laura Morales focus, in Chapter 14, on public opinion, political parties, and the securitisation of migration in Western Europe. They analyse the link between public perceptions, immigration-related politicising strategies, and the construction of immigration as a security issue. After presenting extensive empirical data demonstrating how political parties address immigration, Gattinara and Morales link these political strategies with public sentiments about immigration across seven Western European countries (Gattinara 2016, Morales 2013). Their main conclusions are that, although there is variation across cases in how migration and security are linked in the political sphere, these links match public sentiments on insecurity in almost all the cases under study. Furthermore, despite the fact that political parties’ attention to immigration is relatively stable over time and across cases, the more political parties emphasise the multifaceted security aspects of migration, the more public opinion perceives migration as a security concern.

In Chapter 15, Alexander Caviedes studies the role of media agents in the process of securitising migration. Via a methodological detour, in which qualitative and quantitative approaches are discussed and contrasted, Caviedes highlights the importance of distinguishing between media format, media partisanship, and types of newspaper articles. For him, adopting multiple perspectives is essential to enriching our understanding of the role of media in securitising migration, even though such an approach represents a challenge in terms of conveying arguments and findings in a structured and synthesised way (Caviedes 2015, 2004). In comparing media security narratives in the UK, Germany, and Spain, Caviedes illustrates his argument by showing that the issue of the border is pre-eminent in the UK and Spain, while the issue of crime is the most important one in Germany in media articles that deal with the phenomenon of migration. As such, Caviedes argues for the necessity of providing an understanding of the scope of securitisation in which media agents’ securitising discourses operate.

In Chapter 16, Chris Greenaway and Brian Gushulak explore the links among pandemics, global health, and international migration. They trace the evolution of pandemics and epidemics and highlight the fact that, while the plague and cholera have killed millions of people in the past, the recent international spread of emerging infectious diseases such as H1N1 influenza, SARS, Ebola Virus and Zika Virus constitute threats to global health security (2011). Yet, Greenaway and Gushulak point out that international travel has become a significant factor in the spread of disease in recent years, whereas evidence suggests that the role of international migration in pandemic infection is quite limited.
Part IV

While Parts I-III of this book are divided conceptually rather than geographically, several of the chapters summarized above discuss many ‘areas’ of the world, including the United States, Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, and European countries. The three chapters that comprise Part IV broaden the book’s horizon by looking specifically at the global and regional dimensions of the securitisation of migration.

Antoine Pécoud and Martin Geiger analyse in Chapter 17 the role of international organisations in the securitisation of migration. Although several international organisations promote a non-security understanding of migration, Pécoud and Geiger argue that many of these organizations actually induce migration securitisation in multifaceted ways. They point out that the recent ability of these international organisations to renew and expand their interest in migration has been due in part to the fact that the movement of people has been included into security frameworks (Geiger and Pécoud 2014, 2010). An important illustration is drawn from international organisations’ increasing focus on governance, control, and discipline, which promotes the idea that international migration should be kept under control. Geiger and Pécoud contend that such an emphasis on ‘migration management’ induces the securitisation of migration not only because discipline is a prerequisite for control, but also because international organisations participate in creating securitised representations and worldviews of migration that are infused with the exercise of power.

In Chapter 18, Mikhail Alexseev addresses the large-scale movement of people within Russia and Central Asia in the aftermath of the Cold War: an estimated 20 million people changed residence across the former Soviet Union from 1991 to 2014. Alexseev posits that this trend, among others, has had profound implications for the state’s capacity to manage and shape residential policy; furthermore, the existence of this trend opens up an opportunity to analyse whether traditional migration concepts and frameworks of analysis apply in this area of the world (Alexseev 2006, Alexseev 2001). He argues that the precipitous disappearance of the Soviet Union in December 1991 exposed the limits of key dichotomous characterisations of migration studies, including the push-pull, internal-external, legal-illegal, and temporary-permanent distinctions. Furthermore, Alexseev contends that the immigration security dilemma approach—which focuses on the effects or the anticipation of the effects of the absence of central government authority on perceptions of security threats associated with migration—is useful in explaining the persistence of extreme anti-migrant hostility as well as other socio-political issues largely associated with the migration-security nexus, including ethno-religious identities and intra-minority xenophobia.

In Chapter 19, Robert Muggah identifies security as the main driver of voluntary and involuntary movement of people in Latin America. Muggah points out the ways in which the phenomenon of migration is shaping a new debate in Latin America on the relationship between organised crime and governmental actions: Latin American governments and civil societies have responded to the transnational ramifications of organised crime by stretching the definition of who qualifies for refugee status (Muggah 2015, 2009). As such, voluntary and involuntary movements of people in the region have created new forms of cooperation and partnership. Muggah focuses on key moments to trace the evolution of multilateral cooperation in the area of
migration, including the 1984 Cartegena Declaration, the 2004 Mexico Plan, and the 2014 Borders of Solidarity and Safety programme. He concludes by remarking that, despite these important milestones in addressing refugee and displacement challenges, evidence of ‘real action’ on the ground remains uneven across Latin America.


