

A THEORETICAL LOOK ON GREEK RESPONSE TO THE REFUGEE CRISIS



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Özet

Ortadoğu'dan Avrupa Birliği üye ülkelerine yönelik artan göç dalgaları politikacıların ve liderlerin gündeminde önemli bir yer edinir hale gelmiştir. Bu durum 2015 yılından itibaren "Mülteci Krizi" olarak adlandırılan dönemde çok sayıda mülteci kabul eden İtalya, İspanya ve Yunanistan gibi üye ülkeler için daha da kritik bir hal almıştır. Uluslararası İnsancıl Hukuk'un temel değerlerinden olan "geri göndermeme" ilkesi zaman ve durum gözetmeksizin herhangi bir mültecinin zulüm riskinin olduğu bir ülkeye geri gönderilmemesi gerektiğinin altını çizmektedir. Ancak 2015 sonrası dönemde devletlerin tepkilerinin bulunulan bağlam içerisinde şekillendiği ve farklılıklar gösterdiği gözlenmiştir. Bu makalede Kopenhag Okulu ve Realist teori tarafından öne sunulmuş varsayımlar ve argümanlar karşılaştırılarak teorik bir perspektiften 2018 ve 2021 yılları arasında Yunanistan'ın mültecilere yönelik tutumu incelenecektir. Bu çalışmanın öne sunduğu argüman Kopenhag Okulu'nun belirtilen zaman aralığı içerisindeki tutumu açıklamakta yetersiz kalmasına karşılık Realist teorinin korumacı sınır politikalarını ve güvenlik merkezli yaklaşımı anlamak için uygulanabileceğidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kopenhag Okulu, Güvenikleştirme, Göç, Güvenlik Çalışmaları, Realizm (Gerçekçilik)

Abstract

The massive migration flows from the Middle Eastern countries towards the European Union had become one of the central issues in the policy-makers agendas. Especially, the period after 2015, often regarded as the Refugee Crisis, challenged particularly three-member states, Italy, Spain, and Greece, when they had received a high number of refugees. One of the core values of the international human rights law, the non-refoulment principle, applies to all migrants regardless of time and migration status, and it guarantees that any person should not be turned back to a state where there is a risk of persecution, cruelty, inhuman treatment, torture or other irreparable harm. However, in terms of their responses, the EU member states had shown differences and approaches changed

over time depending on changing context conditions. Due to this paper's limited nature, there will be a focus on Greek response in recent years while carrying a theoretical attempt by comparing the assumptions and insights provided by Copenhagen School and Realist School. In the end, the presented argument in this study is that realism can be applied to explain a protectionist Greek approach during the last years towards incoming migrants as the Copenhagen School is limited to some extent.

Keywords: Securitization, Realism, the Copenhagen School, Migration, Security Studies

Introduction

Theories of international relations (IR) present a set of helpful tools to understand and interpret states' and many additional actors' perceptions, including their responses in global politics. In general, these theories focus on political behaviours, such as studying under what conditions cooperation or conflict occurs. Each theory has comparable advantages to one another to bring explanation from multiple perspectives, so all of them have significant contributions on differentiating interpretations and focusing areas. Especially during the Cold War period, the traditional understanding of security within international relations was beneficial as focusing on threats possessed by the military and hard power. However, issues related to security experienced a gradual shift over time, and it has been argued that there might be more referent objects rather than explicitly the state, but such as identities, individuals, groups, environmental and economic threats (Betts, 2009).

The securitization theory developed by the Copenhagen School brought a new lens on international security studies while putting more emphasis on non-military actors and deepening the classical understanding of security issues. Within this approach, the role of political speeches and discourses on migration and demonstrating it as a security threat had been studied. Therefore, the mass refugee flows occurred after 2015, mainly studied from that perspective. Although there has been a lack of attention on explaining state attitudes towards forced migration from the mainstream IR theories, this paper argues that realist school is particularly beneficial to understand how the securitizing perceptions and restrictive policies over migration can be explained from a state-centric perspective by mainly focusing on the Greek response towards refugee flows within the years between 2018 and 2021 because if governments regard forced migration as a national security issue and their policies shape by threat perceptions rather than humanitarian aspects, as observed in Greek approach, then it can be studied from a realist perspective by relying on its core assumptions.

Although this research paper's nature is limited, several primary and secondary data sources such as the previous interviews with refugees', press publications including reports and news, founding studies on the IR theories, and analysis from other researchers will be used to diversify data and findings to provide a base for this study. Hence, this paper investigates the theoretical explanation of the Greek response to the irregular refugee flows between 2018 and 2021; and, a comparative approach benefiting from Copenhagen School and Realist School will be applied to analyse the process.

The remaining part of the paper is structured as follows. In the first part, the theoretical lens section reveals the core assumptions of the Copenhagen School and realism to apply them in the following sections to explain Greece's attitude towards refugee flows. Secondly, there will be a brief explanation of the European and Greek migration policy's historical aspects to understand changing dimensions behind the securitization process and responses. Then, the Greek response in the given time period will be investigated to interpret the drivers and motivations behind it from a theoretical framework. In the last section, the presented argument in this study is that until recent years Copenhagen School was enough to explain the perceptions towards migration within the European Union, but considering the recent incidents, there is a need for alternative theoretical framework because the chaos that occurred after the mass refugee flows and different consequences of migration among member states has resulted in a more aggressive and protective Greek response while policymakers had started to take stricter measures. Even on some occasions, Greek forces had used force to protect their territorial borders, as they have regard migration flows as a threat that should be avoided. In that sense, core assumptions of realism, which emphasize the superiority of state interests over moral values or international obligations, showed themselves within states' actions. Therefore, one of the dominant paradigms of international relations, realism, can be applied to understand the drivers behind a more aggressive Greek response.

Theoretical Lens

When the Cold War ended, there had been a systematic shift observed around the globe. This change had affected migration and security studies as well; consequently, new discussions and approaches introduced to world politics that goes beyond hard realist explanations. Many scholars offered new perspectives on security conceptualization; thereby, security issues moved beyond another level from the classical realist approach. Within Copenhagen School, traditional security has widened and deepened while scholars started

to emphasize non-military conceptions, among others. According to Wæver (1996), security can also be defined as a practice and a particular way of framing an issue. Within this approach, security can be differentiating as environmental, political, economic, and societal rather than focusing on the military. From that theoretical framework, the crucial point is in order to make something a security issue, a political speech or declaration on demonstrating the issue as a security threat is necessary. In terms of migration, societal security developed by the Copenhagen School is linked with identity and state. In many aspects' migration had regarded as a threat to societal security.

Especially, the Copenhagen School's contributions introduced the theory of securitization to international security studies, and it can be defined as a process that security issues emerge, widen, and spread around particular structures as a representation of them like existential threats against crucial values and norms (Weaver, 1993: 46-86). Consequently, securitization has a dependency on the practices, and it is linked with an act that makes the issue a security threat. Therefore, the speech act is a crucial step of the securitization that usually starts by political elites and including it the security agenda. In order to make speech act a successful tool, it should be adopted and recognized by the targeted audience. The core logic behind this is that individuals are an inevitable part of society; thereby, they cannot be isolated, whereas their security might be differing from the states (Weaver, 1993). Societal groups as referent objects, and Weaver emphasized governments as responsible for ensuring security while focusing on societal cohesion and identity.

After this point, the core assumptions of realism will be touched upon to compare and contrast these assumptions in the following sections. It can be argued that neorealism is one of the most dominant IR theories in the literature. The foundations of neorealism can be traced back to classical realist thought that origins are established with the Thucydides and Machiavelli, and then later developed by the Morgenthau. Core assumptions of classical realism are as the following; states are principal actors in world politics, and they act unitarily, which can be predicted; decision-makers and leaders are rational actors, and the primary concern of the states is always power and security; thereby, states must protect themselves from both internal and external enemies. At this point, a famous quote from Thucydides explains how the classical realists see world politics: "while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must." In his study, Morgenthau (1948) highlights the role of the security dilemma, anarchy, and politics of power as central themes. He acknowledged that states are surrounded by anarchy

under the absence of global authority, so the self-help system occurs. Also, states are core actors in international politics; even though there are non-state actors, they only have a secondary role in influencing global affairs.

In classical realism, the central concern of states is security. Hence, there is no room for moral concerns whereby the significance of justice, morals, ethics, and international law is less bounding than security concerns. Later, as a defensive realist, Waltz (1979) regards security as the core of the system rather than power struggles and includes within the conditions of global politics; international cooperation is limited by nature. Neorealism agrees that states are amoral, self-interested power maximisers with minimal scope for altruistic or moral behaviour. (Betts, 2009). These conditions decrease the international institutions' relevance because self-interested states will care about their relative gains. This assumption proves itself when we look at the lack of cooperation in the field of migration because there has been no organization or institution that has overall responsibility to guarantee migrant rights or worldwide cooperation. It can be argued that United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) have such aims, but often both have the lack of capacity to create an essential change or contribution in the field because of the unwillingness of the states on the issue, as the self-interested nature of states push them to take control over that sense.

As a founding name of neorealism, Waltz (1979) argued that power must be accepted as a process, so, in that sense, a different source of power should be mentioned that are natural sources of power, tangible sources of power, and intangible sources of power. The third one particularly essential in the context of the problematization of migration while it includes national image, leadership, and importance of cohesive society within a nation. Within these perspectives, power is a relative concept that depends on the context. It can be multidimensional; such as culture, ideology, domestic politics, and economy can play a role along with military power.

European Migration Policy, Securitization of Migration and Greek Policies

Especially after the 9/11 events, there had been rising security concerns within Western governments' national and international political agendas. However, according to Huysmans (2006), the consideration of migration as a destabilizing factor on public order has been taking place since the 1980s. The European integration process has indicated a restrictive migration policy area and a consideration over migration into a security issue such as by

the Third Pillar on Justice and Home Affairs, the Schengen Agreements, and the Dublin Convention.

Establishing a common migration policy within the European Union can be regarded as a political, professional, and societal process. By relying on the Copenhagen School's arguments, the root causes of the securitization of migration can be studied while looking at its presentation as a danger to social cohesion and public order, national identity, the stability of the markets, and economic burden. The threat perception occurred as a possible danger against the welfare states' lifestyle, particularly among EU members. In his studies, Huysmans (2006) demonstrated that the EU's project as the economic internal market focus moved beyond as becoming internal security project. As a historical development of securitizing migration, a gradual shift has been observed over time because of the problematization of migration. During the 1960s, several European States had a more permissive or even promotional approach over migration that the benefits of the extra labour had shaped. This shift in approaches is also in line with the realist assumptions on the states' self-interested nature because when their demand for labour had gone, they have started to take more protective measures.

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During the 1970s, public concern over immigration started to rise. Consequently, there had been more assertive control of the state over the issue, even that many immigrants were continued to be considered as guest workers at the time (Huysmans, 2006). One of the turning points in that sense came with the Council Regulation 1612/68 that differentiate the free movement of EU citizens and putting restrictions on other nationals from third countries. According to Ugur (1995), this has led to the creation of the fortress Europe while distinguishing people's movements within Europe and beyond its borders.

Meanwhile, the European Economic Community's, as its formal name back then, enlargement has been continued and included more countries such as, in 1981, Greece joined the Community. According to Huysmans (2006), the significant Europeanization of migration policies has been intensified during the mid-1980s, asylum and migration have become more and more politicized while connecting irregular migration in a way with illegality. Meanwhile, there had been increasing focus on the protection of the public order and domestic stability. Another crucial step was forming the Schengen Area by the Single European Act in 1986. Within the Convention on the Schengen Agreement, terrorism, immigration, asylum, transnational crime, and border control has shown connected with each other in a way (Bigo, 1996: 55-75). Then, in the 1990 Dublin Regulation, there were essential efforts to create common migration and asylum policies by strengthening control over the European Union's external borders. In 1992, this regulation was followed by the Maastricht Treaty

on the creation of the European Union. When the Third Pillar on Justice and Home Affairs introduced, migration has become an explicit subject. Four years later, it moved to the First Pillar as a result of the unsatisfactory intergovernmental approach over migration in the Third Pillar, after the Intergovernmental Conference.

Consequently, the security discourses and problems have resulted in security policy to protect the state, nation, and economy within the internal market as immigrants and asylum-seekers have been viewed as a threat against all of them (Lodge, 1993: 40). Meanwhile, the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam played a crucial role while increasing liberalization for the citizens of the EU member states by removing borders, on the other hand, it had created a more restrictive and control-oriented policy approaches for the other people beyond the fortress of Europe, meaning non-member countries nationals (Kostakopoulou, 2000: 500). In 1999, the European Council made an important meeting called Tampere Summit to establish the Area of Freedom, Security, and Justice while focusing on immigration, common asylum policy, the management of migration flows, fight against terrorism, and police cooperation.

Furthermore, the establishment of Frontex (The European Border and Coast Guard Agency) in 2004 was deeply related to the securitizing moves that occurred after the 9/11 attacks in the United States that raised concerns over terrorism, borders, and security. The development of the internationalization of the security agenda moved in line with venue shopping that several agent's contributions on internationalizing policies and, these restrictive and control-oriented approaches demonstrated migration frame as a security issue because the emphasis on European policies over migration carried a link between cultural homogeneity/unity and stabilization as promoting European identity; thereby, multiculturalism possessed a challenge. They have been started to use instruments of security, so migration has been securitized within the European Union, and the Copenhagen School was particularly beneficial to understand this process.

In terms of Greek policies and perceptions over migration, especially increased levels of mass migration towards Greece during the 1990s escalated hostility and fear within the public to migrants because of the unpreparedness and inconsistencies of migration policies. According to Triandafyllidou (2014), Greek migration policy in the 1990s and 2000s was mainly reactive rather than proactive. In 2010, when the Greek Parliament adopted Law 3838, a step that was taken on citizenship and naturalization regulations since the law had a vision for progressive migrant integration. It was followed by Law 3907/2011 as an attempt to modernize the asylum process within the state by establishing additional Asylum and First Reception Services exclusive from police forces

(Lazaridis & Skleparis, 2017: 185) These new legislations facilitated the creation of new border control methods and institutional structures. Overall, it aimed to simplify the immigration control process and organize data collection.

Historically, Greece was a country of emigration rather than immigration, but when this situation has changed, public opinion about migrant populations along with elite discourse had characterized by danger and threat against national identity, sovereignty, and societal security. At that point, it is important to note that societal security is deeply related to identity within the Copenhagen School because societal security has a broad view that argues as states concerned with their survival and integrity, so does societies should defend themselves against threats to their core values and national identity for protecting cultural characteristics. Societal security concerns with migration because migrants usually come from different ethnic groups, religious affiliations, and cultural backgrounds. According to Swarts and Karakatsanis (2012), government policies in Greece and public speeches of political figures became influential in creating a negative connotation on migration-related to a threat, criminality, and security as Copenhagen School called this speech act. Thereby, the Copenhagen School can be applied to highlight the background of presenting migration as a problem in Greece.

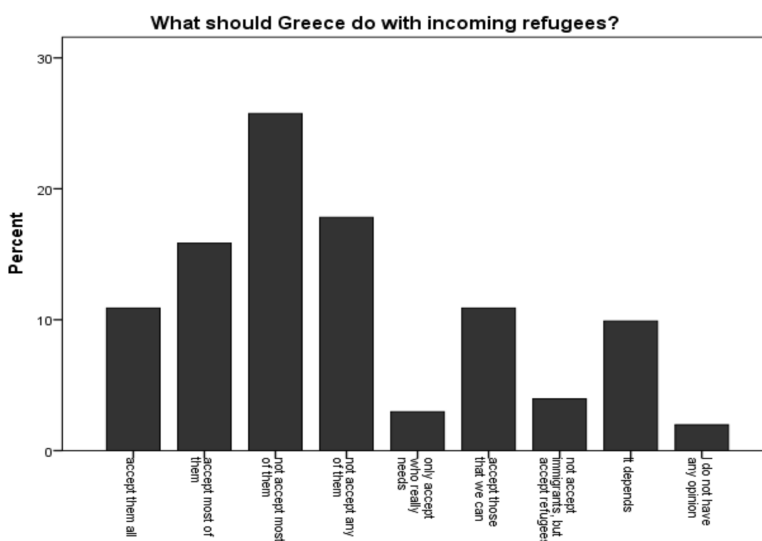
On the one hand, there were policies and actions that had a purpose of restricting migration flows driven by far-right and anti-immigrant attitudes; for instance, the Greek Operation Aspida and Xenios Zeus carried out at the Turkish-Greek borderland to combat irregular migration of third-country nationals. Moreover, in 2012, the government extended the detention period up to twelve months, and within this year, a 12.5 km-long barbed wire fence was constructed at the border. On the other hand, in 2015, the SYRIZA-led coalition government decided to close migrant detention centres and turn them into hospitality centres. Then, the coalition government reactivated Law 3709/11 to allow rejected asylum seekers and migrants to return their homes voluntarily without detention. Additionally, the government also tried to change internal and external border control regulations; for instance, in February 2015, the Alternate Minister for Migration Policy proclaimed that Operation Xenios Zeus remained in the past, and Operation Aspida decided to discontinued because of a considerable reduction in refugee flows at the Greek-Turkish border (Bolani, Gemi and Skleparis, 2016: 83). Another important decision made by the coalition government was working on the naturalization of second-generation migrants. In that sense, Law 4332/2015 enabled migrant children to become Greek citizens if they were born and raised in Greece.

Later, the policy change occurred when the EU-Turkey Action Plan was established. According to Skleparis (2017), following the conclusion of the deal,

the tightening of asylum, detention, deportation, and external border control policies had increased. In April 2016, a new asylum law 4375/16 was accepted as a response to the exceptional asylum regime. Thereby, two different international protection procedures started to apply to migrants depending on if they arrived before or after the EU-Turkey Statement's activation.

Before moving towards Greece's recent attitude, it is essential to look at public opinion as it is a crucial dimension behind policy-makers decisions. According to Lazaridis and Skleparis (2016), for the year 2009, 66% of Greeks stated that economic migrants have a negative impact on Greece rather than benefits, and in 2012, these numbers had reached to 78%. Moreover, Lazaridis and Skleparis (2016) demonstrated in their study the immigration was the second most important issue affecting voting behaviours in the 2012 elections, and they have claimed that securitization of migration has embedded in state policies and institutional structures. Also, the bar chart below demonstrates that the majority of the participants who conducted the survey stated they are in favour of not accepting most of the refugees, the rate is around 25%; and the second popular answer is not to accept any of the refugees with almost 20% of the participants. Later, a survey made in 2017 by Public Issue on behalf of the Athens' City Hall demonstrated that in Athens, 44% percent of the Athenians regarded refugees as a threat, and 54% did not believe the refugees could be absorbed by Greek society.

Table 1: Percentages on Greek public opinion towards refugees in 2016



Source: The above bar chart made by the researcher. Data obtained from the survey conducted by Public Issue, received in 6 March 2021 from <https://www.publicissue.gr/en/2978/pol-bar-154-mar-2016-ref/>

Greek Response between 2018 and 2020

Since 2015 the Mediterranean has become one of the most dangerous and deadly crossing locations of refugees. In 2015, 856,732 and in 2016, 173,450 sea arrivals in Greece are reported (UNHCR, 2020). As the table below demonstrates, for the years between 2015 and 2020, the number of refugees who arrived at Greek borders showed fluctuations over time. Although there had been a significant decline observed after the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan, the situation has remained highly problematic.

Table 2: Number of Arrivals to Greece between 2014 and 2020

Previous years	Sea arrivals	Land arrivals	Dead and missing
2020	9,687	5,982	102
2019	59,726	14,887	71
2018	32,494	18,014	174
2017	29,718	6,592	59
2016	173,450	3,784	441
2015	856,723	4,907	799
2014	41,038	2,280	405

Source: Operational Data Portal; service provided by the UNHCR.

The data retrieved 20 February 2021 from <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations>

According to UNHCR Greece Factsheet November 2018, the total number of refugees and migrants in Greece was 69,300, and this number had risen to 121,100 by 2020 (UNHCR,2020). In 2018, based on the interviews they have made, Human Rights Watch acknowledged that, while pushing asylum seekers and migrants to return, Greek law enforcement officers at the Turkish-Greece land border on some occasions used violence. In mid-2018, the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture acknowledged information on multiple consistent and credible allegations of push-backs by Greek boats towards Turkey at the Evros River border by masked unidentified Greek police and border guards. Gardos, who is a European Researcher at the Human Rights Watch, stated that:

"People who did not commit a crime are detained, beaten, and thrown out of Greece without any consideration for their rights or safety. Therefore, Greek

authorities should immediately investigate the repeated allegations of illegal push-backs” (HRW, 2018).

According to the UNHCR 2020 Report, Turkey hosts 4 million asylum seekers and refugees; those 3.6 million accounts for Syrians under temporary protection. A pragmatic but also highly controversial deal between the European Union and Turkey was made in 2016 to create the Action Plan over the worsening refugee crisis. In general terms, the plan formed based on a compromise as more strict border controls by Turkey over irregular migration towards the EU member states in exchange for financial aid from the European Union, a readmission agreement on visa liberalization for Turkish citizens, and a second look towards blocked accession chapters. In some aspects, the deal might be interpreted as a strategic partnership between the two sides. While looking at the number of arrivals, it can be argued that between 2015 and 2020, the deal had an impact on decreasing refugee flows to the EU. However, the deal's implementation had suffered over time because of conflicting interests and compromises in several policy areas. The deal's total failure came in 2020 when the Turkish policymakers decided not to stop the refugee flow towards Europe by land and sea with the 27th February announcement and opened borders. Turkish President Erdogan stated that *“Until all Turkey’s expectations, including free movement, ... updating of the customs union and financial assistance are tangibly met, we will continue the practice on our borders”* (DeutscheWelle, 2020).

After the announcement, the United Nations predicted about 15,000 individuals and families from different countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria tried to reach Greece through the northern land border with Turkey. Consequently, thousands of refugees and asylum seekers moved towards the Turkish-Greek Pazarkule border gate to the Evros River, a natural border between Turkey and Greece. Kyriakos Mitsotakis, the Greek Prime Minister, tweeted on 28 February, *“Significant numbers of migrants and refugees have gathered in large groups at the Greek-Turkish land border and have attempted to enter the country illegally. I want to be clear: no illegal entries into Greece will be tolerated”* (Amnesty International, 2020).

As a response to the incoming refugees towards their borders, the Greek government had mobilized to the border police, army, and special forms to prevent crossing borders. Following this, an aggressive response from the Greece armed forces came, and heavily armed Greek border guards used tear gas, rubber bullets, and razor wire to stop entrance into Greek territories

(Amnesty International, 2020). According to Stevis-Gridneff (2020), Greece deployed military forces to long land and sea borders at its Turkish border, and the Greek government stated that it would suspend asylum applications and deport anyone arriving irregularly for one month by passing an emergency legislative Act on 2 March (Amnesty International, 2020). They had used force against the crowds, and some of them were injured and wounded. According to the interviews made by the Human Rights Watch, Turkish residents who are living close to the border stated that between February 28th, and 6th March 2020, large groups of people turned back from the border injured, and they added that those people had claimed the Greek security forces had beaten, robbed and deported them. In 2020, according to the Human Rights Watch, Greek security forces and unidentified armed men at the Greece-Turkey land border had detained, and assaulted asylum seekers and migrants, then forced them back to Turkey. Deputy Director of the Amnesty International Europe Regional Office, Massimo Moratti, acknowledged that;

“People moved from Turkey to Greece to reach safety, but they were faced with serious violence that at least two were tragically killed. Allegations of violence must be promptly and impartially investigated. Everyone should be treated humanely, shielded from aggression, and be provided access to protection in the countries where they are seeking safety” (Amnesty International, 2020).

These inhumane measurements were international, and the EU law violation, especially the Geneva Convention 1951, but Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said; *Greek borders are the external borders of Europe; thereby, we will protect them.* (Prime Minister GR, 2020) Later, Stelios Petsas, the spokesman of the Greek government, said:

“Greece had under an illegal, mass and sudden attempt to raze our borders and stood up protecting both our frontiers with those of Europe too. Under these conditions, the current situation is an active, serious, asymmetric, and extraordinary threat to national security. Because of all of these reasons, in its meeting today, the National Security Council agreed to increase the security measures at the highest degree in the eastern, land, and sea borders by the police security and the armed forces to avoid illegal entries into the country. Also, it decided for a temporary suspension of the asylum lodging by those entering Greece illegally for one month from the date of receipt of this decision. Also, there will be an immediate return to the origin. Lastly, it has been decided to submit a request to FRONTEX to deploy the RABIT team to protect Greek external borders as they

are also the EU borders. Therefore, Greece is determined to do whatever it takes to protect its borders” (The Chad European Federalists, 2020).

However, Greece is bound by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which recognizes the right to seek asylum and guarantees protection from refoulement, the forcible return of anyone to a real risk of persecution or other serious harm. However, on the contrary of this obligation, the President of the EU Commission Ursula Von Der Leyen stated that:

“These borders are not only Greek borders, but it is also European. And I stand here as a European at your side..... We have come here today to send an obvious statement of European solidarity and support to Greece. Our first priority is making sure that order is maintained at the Greek external border, which is also a European border. I am fully committed to mobilizing all the necessary operational support to the Greek authorities” (European Commission, 2020).

Furthermore, Greek state ships and private vessels are bound by treaties of law and international customary law to proceed to sea and intercept vessels in distress. Under these circumstances, all states are obliged to assist ships in reaching the nearest place to achieve protection, but there had been international criticisms over Greek response to asylum seekers’ mass arrivals because of the inhumane and inadequate reception conditions. In March 2020, Greece refused to allow more than 450 individuals on a naval vessel to lodge asylum claims, and that decision was contradictory to international law as well as the European Law as people’s refusal to seek asylum and send back is not adequate to the values and principles of Greece that claims to adopt (HRW, 2020). Although Greece has the right to control border flows and manage crossings into its territory, according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, people also have a right to seek asylum.

According to the Press Release of the Turkish Foreign Ministry (2021), on 18 February 2021, a group of thirteen Afghan asylum seekers, including women and children, were pushed back to Turkey from Greek border after being beat and their valuables and money were confiscated. Later, according to Turkish officials, Turkish border units rescued in total fifty-one asylum-seekers and migrants who arrived in Greek territories via Bulgaria and Serbia from death. Further interviews with those people had demonstrated they had pushed-back from Greece. Those unlawful practices and push-backs demonstrate a systematic policy that has been continuing for recent

years, and more than eighty-thousand asylum seekers pushed back to Turkey in the last four years (Turkish Foreign Ministry, 2021). It is important to highlight again that all of those inhumane measures and human rights violations were prohibited by international law, the European Union Law, and the 18th March Statement.

However, it is important to highlight again, as an EU member state and a party to the 1951 Convention Regulating the Status of Refugees, Greece is obliged to follow its international and European responsibilities such as being obliged to non-refoulement principle, assisting refugees' access to adequate asylum procedures, and assuring those reception arrangements are humane with detention as an exception and last resort measure. On the other hand, according to Betts and Collier (2017), to some extent, Geneva Convention of 1951 remains vague on which state has the primary responsibilities over refugees. Therefore, it can be argued that responses are highly dependent on politics, mostly power politics, rather than laws or principles (p. 49). Established international principles highlighting global responsibility for the issue, as the 1951 Geneva Convention's Preamble states that international cooperation is required for successful protection, assistance, and finding solutions. However, when it comes to the practice, in global politics, there is a lack of operational mechanisms to determine burden-sharing between countries as happened to Greece and another frontline state, Italy, on responsibility-sharing. As an example, the failure of the EU plan in 2015, which was about the redistribution of refugees, can be given. Within the European Union, a lack of cooperation between Northern and Southern member states had become a failure of collective action, and the absence of the precise rules had made the attempts made by UNHCR more challenging (Betts & Collier, 2017: 49-54). From a theoretical perspective, it can be argued that the realist assumption on the limited nature of international cooperation and regulations on the aspects seen as a security issue by states showed itself in this situation.

Moreover, considering the realist assumptions given in the previous section, the realist school had mainly concerned with hard power and security rather than soft, and it can be applied to explain Greek response within the given period because of the following reasons. Firstly, as discussed in the third section, increasing migration levels have been regarded as a security threat by political actors within the European Union and have established securitizing policies over the issue. From a realist perspective, immigration could result in a shift in the balance of power while affecting the states' power depending on the intangible sources such as cohesion and integrity of the society.

Furthermore, according to Castles (1995), over the 20th century, especially unregulated migration started to challenge state sovereignty, and a gradual link between conflict and international migration occurred with the influence over the events such as the 9/11 attacks or the Islamic radicals' attacks on several parts of Europe such as in Spain for the year 2004. (p. 24) The perceptions over international migration as it possesses a threat against security have increased. This can be put as a clash between global migration and sovereignty because refugees and migrants can be complicating actors for national sovereignty as they challenge the nation-state's ideal type. (Betts, 2009: 53). Krasner (1999) defines Westphalian sovereignty while arguing political organization is based on excluding external actors from authority structures within a specific territory. (p. 14) Also, in his terms, interdependence sovereignty refers to the state authorities' control over the low transboundary movements. (Krasner, 1999: 24) Westphalian state order defines states as the actors with legitimate use of force overpower and autonomy while security was regarded mainly as military sense. In that sense, security is also seen as the protection of state sovereignty, including its strategic interests. These two definitions of sovereignty are in line with the realists and neorealists over the national sovereignty explains one of the deeper reasons behind increasing measures that Greece had taken against refugee flows. Secondly, based on realist assumptions, the state's altruistic and moral actions are not desirable, while states are power maximisers that focus on their interests and gains rather than altruistic behaviours, and as the Greek response demonstrated, their primary concern is power and security; they must protect themselves from both internal and external enemies by using any means regardless of international law and boundaries that they have obliged to follow. Consequently, the Greek border forces' strict response is not surprising because, from Greece's perspective, they had protected their borders against an external threat.

Evaluation

All security issues are political, but not necessarily all the political problems become security issues. If a political situation can be solved without violence and force through diplomacy, it is not accurate to see it as a security issue. In order to transform it into a security issue, one should rely on violence or threaten the other side with using force. From a theoretical framework, the Copenhagen School demonstrated the securitization of migration occurred

through its representation as a security threat while putting emphasis on non-military actors, and it was very-well founded to explain the securitization of the common European Migration Policies over time with the problematization of migration because there had been increasing focus on the security discourses and issues related to immigrants and asylum-seekers as a threat to the state, nation, and economy within the internal market. However, the Copenhagen School and securitization theory are limited in explaining using force and human rights violations committed by Greek border forces to prevent refugee flows as Copenhagen School focuses on soft power and speech act. In this paper, it has been argued that the response against migration has moved beyond another level rather than 'speech act' and securitizing it but became a real security issue within Greece as the Greek forces had used hard measures against the refugees in order to protect their borders because they regard refugee flows as a threat rather than a humanitarian issue. Therefore, considering recent incidents, there is a need for an alternative theoretical framework to explain Greek response, with the involvement of hard power and military measures in reactions. In that sense, realist assumptions are particularly beneficial while looking at strategic interests, lack of international obligations' importance, and emphasis on national sovereignty. Greek responses were highly dependent on power politics rather than laws, values, or established principles. When it comes to the practice, Greek authorities have proven realist assumptions in terms of the self-interested nature of states, also, international law and the EU Law violations by Greece had demonstrated that there is no place for moral concerns and the importance of justice, morals, ethics is less bounding compared to security concerns.

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