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### Introduction

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IN EUROPE

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and Lyubov Zhyznomirska*

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# INTRODUCTION

## The case for regional approach to study politics of migration

*Agnieszka Weinar, Saskia Bonjour and Lyubov Zhyznomirska*

Unlike settler societies such as the United States or Australia, European nation-states generally do not perceive of themselves as countries of immigration. Rather than being part of their national founding or ongoing nation-making myths, immigration in Europe has historically been perceived as exceptional to the normal state of things – a disturbance or even a threat. However, Europe's history is, in fact, characterised by migration driven by war, imperialism, trade, faith, poverty, love and myriad other reasons. More recently, the fall of communist regimes in 1989–1991 brought about radical changes in human mobility on the continent, as liberalised border regimes induced population outflows on a massive scale, and civil wars in the former Yugoslavia awoke the spectre of ethnic violence, displacing thousands of people. In addition, the post-Maastricht European Union (EU) (1991) started building its migration policy, thus affecting people's movements both within, and towards, the EU. Expanding European migration systems (i.e. East–West and South–North) prompted searches for new policy responses across the continent, as all countries in Europe gradually became both receiving and sending countries for migration.

To a large extent, the successes of these policy responses have been uneven. The flow of asylum seekers from non-European countries to the EU in 2014–2016, which eclipsed any previous asylum seeker flow to Europe since World War II, uncovered the variations in public and governmental responses to immigration across the continent. First of all, there were differences in the rise of anti-immigrant attitudes expressed in public debates and policy reactions. While such attitudes may be observed throughout Europe, they have been particularly intense in European countries that had not previously experienced significant waves of immigration, such as Poland or Hungary. Second, there were differences in understanding and the level of awareness among political elites and the public in various European countries regarding immigration and the complexity of related social, economic and legal issues, which, arguably, have been the lowest in countries such as Romania and Lithuania, which experience negligible immigration flows. Within the EU in particular, the steep rise in asylum inflows has resulted in a severe political crisis. Any attempts to come up with an EU-wide policy response that is in line with existing EU asylum and migration policies and their underlying principles of solidarity and burden-sharing, have failed to gain acceptance from member states in which (non-European) immigration flows have become suddenly politicised (and this does not concern only Central Eastern Europe).

The ‘asylum crisis’ that Europe has experienced has served to unmask the West-East tensions on migration issues that had remained depoliticised and largely hidden in the context of the accession process for new EU member states. During that process, migration policy-making was packaged into the ‘technocratic’ language of ‘policy transfer’ and ‘adaptation’ to existing norms, specifically in the area of human rights and humanitarian migration. In recent years, the question of how to share the burden of hosting increasing numbers of humanitarian migrants in the EU has provoked a fundamental political discussion about norms and values surrounding migration and political membership – a discussion that had been dormant in Eastern and Central European countries due to a lack of any meaningful migration intake since at least the early 2000s. In particular, xenophobic, racist and nativist responses have become strikingly visible in public and political discussions regarding the potential impact of hosting foreign populations that are perceived as culturally *different* from the receiving societies. These discussions are taking place in societies which largely remain *emigrant-sending* within the pan-European migration system and whose experiences since 1989 with immigration or foreign labour migration have largely been limited to hosting nationals from neighbouring European countries, as is the case for Poland and Hungary.

Whether and how this newly heightened politicisation of migration and asylum seeking across Europe will affect both national and European regimes of migration management, and the politics of migration in Central Eastern and European (CEE) countries and Europe overall is worth pondering about. This Handbook seeks to capture the state of continually evolving responses and processes in European societies, in an attempt to better understand a potentially drastic and pervasive shift in the way politics of migration unfolds and affects people’s lives across the continent and beyond. It also highlights areas, issues, and questions for future research on the politics of migration in Europe.

## Politics of migration

We define the ‘politics of migration’ as a complex process in which various political, social and economic actors negotiate access to, and membership in, a given political community, with an understanding that these actors are not limited to the national arena. Politics of migration can thus be understood as politics of membership. These politics evolve from a basic negotiation over who is allowed in or out (politics of entry/exit), who is accepted as a permanent resident (politics of residence and integration), and how a community defines its boundaries (politics of citizenship and belonging). Within each of these realms is a scene where power plays take place between actors, practices and discourses, the continual interactions between which shape our understanding of migration and the ways to address it. The ways in which these power plays develop shape the politics of migration.

The politics of migration has been a fashionable research topic in the last 40 years or so, with Zolberg (1978) initiating the line of inquiry in the North American context. Since the late 1990s, a call to ‘bring the State back in’ (Brettell and Hollifield 2000) to the study of migration has sparked the evolution of a lively field of study. It has brought to light several pertinent questions on the nature of migration policy development and its impact on migration trends at the macro level, as well as its impact on individual choices at a micro level. However, migration studies developed with an internal fault: the field has created definitions, concepts and frameworks of analysis geared to studying its main subject of analysis – a Western liberal democratic country of destination (Joppke 1999; Mau *et al.* 2012, see Garcés-Masareñas, in this volume). Moreover, the dominance of American scholarship resulted in a greater focus on themes that have been characteristic to the pluralist conception of politics in the USA, including party

politics (Tichenor 2009; Zolberg 2009), lobbyist groups (Freeman 1995), and voter behaviour in relation to migration (Alvarez and Butterfield 2000; Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001).

This particular research agenda was exported outside of the North American context and has been applied to the study of migration politics in some European states. This was frequently done from a comparative perspective (for example, see Fetzer 2000; Hollifield 1992), or by adding new research paths, such as in the comparative study of citizenship regimes (Brubaker 1992) or integration regimes (Castles 1995). Nevertheless, until the mid-1990s, the study of the politics of migration remained focused on a limited number of western European countries, with a total absence of studies on Central and Eastern Europe and, for that matter, the EU itself.

In contemporary research on the politics of migration in Europe, we observe a broad range of conceptualisations of ‘politics’, ranging from quantitative analyses of party politics (Betz 1993; Mudde 1999; van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie 2000; van Spanje 2010), to post-structuralist discourse analysis (De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak 1999; Huysmans 2000; Favell and Hansen 2002; Statham and Geddes 2006). However, the geographical scope of this scholarship has barely reached beyond the countries of the European West. A comprehensive ‘European’ analysis has therefore remained out of reach. Since the early 2000s, as the competences of the EU with regard to asylum and migration have become institutionalised, the EU level of migration politics has become a focus of analysis for migration scholars (Geddes 2005; Guiraudon and Joppke 2001; Lavenex 2001b; Triandafyllidou 2003). At approximately the same time, as the influence of the EU over the accession countries in Central and Eastern Europe in the area of migration and asylum increased, migration politics in the region began to attract scholarly attention (Boswell 2003; Lavenex 2001b). Still, research that examines the experiences of Central and Eastern European countries, within and beyond the EU, has not entered the mainstream of academic migration studies. The main reason for this state of affairs is the dominance of English in mainstream scholarship, whereas most scholarly work in Central and Eastern European countries is done in other languages. This has been slowly changing in recent years, but the knowledge gap persists.

### **European Union vs Europe**

By 2018, Europe as a continent had developed elaborate legal frameworks and practices that have shaped the politics of migration in all of its 51 countries. This happened as a result of European integration dynamics emanating from two cores. First, European countries found themselves under the influence of pan-European institutions (such as the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) and various intergovernmental processes sprawling out across the continent (for example, the Budapest Process and Söderköping Process) as they pursued the ‘added value’ that these venues provided to governments. Second, since the late 1990s, the EU has acted as a major centre of gravity on the continent, with an active normative agenda and externalisation pressures emanating from harmonised migration and border regulations in the emergent ‘area of freedom, security and justice’ in the EU. Consequently, phenomena of policy convergence and/or divergence, policy learning, or policy resistance are at the core of studying the politics of migration in Europe.

Political, social and economic changes sweeping across the continent over the last 30 years produced particular migration-related tensions, which we believe to be distinctly European. They are tensions between migration and mobility, immigration and social class, and between human rights and migration controls.

## Migration and mobility

In European political discourse, ‘migration’ and ‘mobility’ represent two entirely different things. Across the continent, migration has been portrayed as a problematic and mostly negative phenomenon, whereas mobility tends to be viewed positively as an important element increasing people-to-people contacts and economic growth. To give an obvious example of these differentiations in the discourse, students and researchers tend to be viewed as ‘mobile’ Europe-wide, while seasonal workers are ‘migrants’.

Migration and mobility are thus key concepts to examine in order to understand political discourses across Europe. Whether people are perceived and categorised as ‘immigrants’ or as ‘mobile’ depends on their particular political context, which is determined by regional agreements, such as the Nordic Passport Union, State Union of Russia and Belarus, the EU or the Eurasian Union (Dumas and Goldner Lang 2015; Goldner Lang 2011; Weinar 2014). The citizens of such economic/political regions automatically gain certain rights, ranging from passport-free international mobility, to settlement rights, and labour market and welfare rights, all of which are linked to their passports. The exact scope of these rights is based on multilateral treaties that establish such political and economic agreements. Persons who fall under such regional arrangements have more de-facto migration rights – referred to as ‘mobility’ rights – than those who do not.

A prime example of this tension is found when examining EU freedom of movement. In the EU jargon, its citizens do not migrate; rather, they exercise their right to mobility. Policy-wise, EU nationals are excluded from national rules and regulations. In practice, this often means that they are excluded from integration pressure, such as compulsory courses and exams, but it also means they do not have access to integration support, as they are left to navigate the experience alone (Barbulescu 2013; Recchi and Favell 2009). However, as the Brexit debate has highlighted, in the eyes of the public, some EU nationals may very well be viewed as ‘unwanted migrants’, just like any other immigrant group.

Interestingly, when it comes to the politics of migration, EU mobility or any other politically supported mobility of ‘the alike’ in Europe is rarely framed as an immigration issue, even in academic contexts. Most of academic work across the continent has been focused on non-EU migration, and not on mobility within Europe. Our Handbook reflects this focus.

## Immigration and social class

Class plays a key role in the politics of migration in Europe, even though politicians very seldom mention ‘class’ explicitly. One of the recurring themes in the problematisation of immigration in various European countries is the notion that Europe has been receiving the wrong *kind* of immigrants – specifically, not the best and the brightest but rather the ones with ‘poor prospects’ (Bonjour and Duyvendak 2017) because of their low education and poor skills; they are deemed to be those who are likely to impact European economies and welfare states negatively rather than positively. Many European politicians speak enviously of North American migration regimes, which they imagine to be entirely geared towards economic-based selection. There is little awareness that family-related migration makes up the largest part of permanent immigration to the United States. Family migrants represented 680,000 of the 1,051,000 persons obtaining lawful permanent residence status in 2015 (Homeland Security 2016). Similarly, the 60 per cent cap reserved for the economic migrants category in the Canadian point system includes the spouses and children of the primary migrant. In 2015, 79,000 primary applicants in economic class arrived with 91,000 accompanying family members, all of which were included in the

count towards the economic migrant class cap (CIC 2015). Nevertheless, admitting migrants primarily on familial or asylum grounds rather than on economic grounds (labour migrants) is perceived as a European particularity – and a problematic particularity at that. It is this perception that led French President Nicolas Sarkozy to call for ‘*immigration choisie*’ rather than ‘*immigration subie*’, i.e. immigration that is actively chosen rather than passively undergone (FranceInfo 2012).

In contrast to what such political discourses might suggest, European countries do have their own longstanding, economically driven labour migration policies. In the first post-war decades, various north-western European countries implemented large-scale ‘guest worker’ recruitment programmes. By the time these programmes were closed in the mid-1970s, an alternative policy framework for large-scale labour migration in a large part of Europe had been put in place – that is, provisions for the free movement of workers within the Common Market in the European Communities. Other forms of labour migration policies have been developed since then, both at national and at EU levels for specific categories of workers, mostly targeting highly skilled and seasonal workers. Southern European countries, in particular, have also implemented regularisation programmes to allow undocumented labour migrants to access legal residence. In other words, European countries have long had a broad range of policy instruments at their disposal to selectively admit their *immigration choisie*.

Furthermore, humanitarian admission policies, be they for family migrants or refugees, are not disconnected from economic rationales. Civic integration programmes, which have been implemented in a great many European countries (see Goodman, in this volume), require family migrants and refugees alike to participate in language and civic education, as well as labour market integration programmes, with the aim of decreasing their welfare dependency and increasing their economic and social participation. In the most restrictive countries, such as the Netherlands, failure to pass civic integration tests may not only result in serious financial costs, but also in the denial of permanent residency. The economic stratification of family reunification rights in Europe is especially well documented, with scholars pointing to the red carpet laid out for the families of highly skilled labour migrants (Staver 2015), while other migrants and – increasingly – citizens have to meet restrictive employment and income requirements in order to be allowed to bring their foreign spouses and children over (Block and Bonjour 2013; D’Aoust this volume; Kofman 2018).

Finally, while the vast majority of scholars present economic considerations and identity concerns as two distinct rationales shaping migration policies in distinct ways, a recent strand of scholarship explores the ways in which perceptions of economic utility intersect with notions of cultural belonging in the politics of migration in Europe. Political sociologists working on labour migration and irregular migration have shown that self-sufficiency, hard work and economic worth have become part of the ‘national values’ or ‘national identity’ serving to distinguish those who belong from those who do not (Anderson 2013; Chauvin, Garcés-Masareñas and Kraler 2013; Paul 2015). More broadly, scholars have argued that the politics of migration and belonging in Europe are thoroughly classed, as they are based on implicit representations of the national community as hard-working middle class, while unwanted migrants are framed as the undeserving poor (Bonjour and Duyvendak 2017; Elrick and Winter 2017).

## Human rights and migration controls

Europe perceives of itself as the birthplace of human rights. It has a powerful human rights framework, formulated in the European Convention of Human Rights, executed through the European Human Rights Court. The EU is credited for pioneering post-national membership



rights by extending social, economic and even political rights to immigrants (Soysal 1994). These post-national membership rights, derived from the principle of the free movement within the EU, have been further entrenched as EU citizenship rights in post-Maastricht and post-Lisbon EU (Isin and Saward 2013; Maas 2007). In the area of migration, the humanitarian image of Europe, and specifically of the EU, has been a rhetorical driving force spurring policy change, among other things, with regard to addressing the abuse of irregular workers and, in the last decade, the loss of life at sea by migrants seeking access to Europe (for further problematisation of this image, see Follis and Lemberg-Pedersen, both in this volume).

However, historically, Europe has also been a place that various groups have left to escape famine, disease, poverty or persecution, as well as a place where others have sought refuge for similar and additional reasons (such as civil or colonial wars, persecution, or poor governance). Geography, wealth, political and economic order, and security continue to draw those seeking better life chances to Europe. However, in response to significant post-1989 migration flows on the European continent, including the flow of less well-to-do Europeans, (Western) Europe restricted its border and migration control policies. Since then European governments have been engaged in an intricate balancing act between preserving Europe's humanitarian image on the one hand, and addressing anxieties about security, order and well-being on the other hand.

Europe has been engaged in controlling migration flows and reasserting sovereign control over the borders and access to the territory through, among other things, visa policies, the fortification/militarisation and technological equipping of borders, new wall and fence making in the south-east of Europe, and increased surveillance and internal policing of foreign population. It is also a continent where detention and deportation have been growing, and where return is proclaimed as a 'humane' solution to 'unwanted' populations remaining in EU territory. There are constant challenges and tensions between labour demands and immigration restrictions, and between the need for protection and the lack of safe territorial passages for people fleeing persecution.

Migration controls and policies preventing the arrival of asylum seekers on EU territory have further diversified irregular migration flows, pushing asylum seekers to mainly use illegal routes to access the EU, and revealing the inherent tension between human rights and the desire to maintain sovereignty over their borders and those policies which determine who gets to be included in the political community. The last two decades have revealed the ongoing tensions between preserving the sovereign right of European states to – individually or collectively within the EU – control their borders and arrivals into their territories, and the desire to preserve Europe's image as a continent that honours its human rights and humanitarian commitments. Despite various efforts to seal the borders and engage 'transit' and origin countries in controlling and preventing the arrival of migrants on EU territory, mixed migration flows continue to pose multiple political, social, humanitarian, and moral challenges at the local, national and European level (Triandafyllidou and Bartolini 2017, p. 5). The reluctant and often chaotic reception of Syrian asylum seekers heightened Islamophobia throughout Europe but it also showed the compassion of Europeans. Praised by the Commission as an effective tool to stem migration flows towards the EU, the EU–Turkey migration deal and the EU's migration pacts with countries like Libya, where slavery of migrant workers has been documented (IOM 2017), have also been highly criticised. Such diplomatic and policy solutions not only hurt Europe's humanitarian image, but also place in jeopardy the result of years of promoting the EU's asylum standards to neighbouring countries (Collett 2016; Rankin 2017; Toaldo 2017).

Being of mixed nature, migration flows through the Southern routes (including Western Mediterranean, central Mediterranean and Eastern Mediterranean routes) have placed humanitarian issues related to migration management front and centre. Saving human lives at sea has

been turned into a spectacle for mass consumption, prompting not only the security-based rationale of the state apparatus in response to ‘uncontrolled’ flows and those who facilitate the ‘illegal’ journeys, but also expressing itself as compassion, such as that which was witnessed in the Greek citizens’ response to the arrivals of Syrians, and non-governmental organisations’ mounting efforts to save lives. However, despite the political rhetoric about development and addressing the root causes of irregular migration, security is the driving logic of policy responses. Scholars have demonstrated that policies targeting networks and facilitators involved in moving people to Europe in illegal or semi-legal ways constantly innovate and adapt their business models, in which, for that matter, desperate people partake for the sake of their survival or better life chances for themselves or their families.

Being located in close proximity to major ongoing civil and international conflicts in Yemen, Syria, Ukraine, Sudan and South Sudan, each with their past colonial links, various parts of Europe still act as magnets to people on the move. Moreover, population growth in African countries, in conjunction with the growing share of young populations there, will continue to make people choose geographic mobility if economies and politics are unable to provide for growing workforces.

### **Scope and organisation of the Handbook**

This Handbook is organised into eight parts, each representing an important field of scholarly inquiry into the politics of migration in Europe. Each part, with the exception of the final methodological Part VIII, includes a commentary.

The ambition of this Handbook is to go *beyond* the study of the politics of migration in the handful of Western European and Southern European countries to showcase a *European* approach to the study of migration politics, inclusive of the tendencies in all geographical parts of Europe (including Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey), and of the influences of the EU on the continent and beyond. To that end, the overarching question being critically examined by the Handbook is: What is exceptional about European politics of migration and its study? However, it has proved challenging to offer a comprehensive continental European perspective with each contribution. Indeed, some areas of academic scrutiny have not been developed enough in many parts of Europe and thus have not yet influenced European academic thought. There are two related reasons for this. First, since the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century, only a handful of countries in north-western Europe have had extensive experience with immigration and thus, have had the incentive, time, and resources to develop robust academic responses to the variety of issues surrounding the politics of migration. In a vast majority of European countries immigration did not become an issue until 2015. Second, scholars in Eastern Europe have been dealing with migration mostly from the perspective of countries of origin, because even in recent years emigration has often overshadowed immigration, both in terms of numbers and in terms of public and political concern. Scholarship on emigration is, in practice, a separate category in migration studies. The resulting dominance of Western-centric perspectives in migration studies in Europe is reflected in various chapters in this Handbook. Nevertheless, in order to cover as much ground as possible in developing a continental approach to the study of the politics of migration, we invited section commentators to debate those concepts developed in Western Europe, and discuss their usefulness and relevancy in other European regions.

The Governance part (I) identifies the peculiarities of European migration governance and the way in which it has been studied. The contributing authors explore the Europeanised and multilevel structure of migration governance in Europe, as well as processes of policy

implementation and the role of expertise and media. Furthermore, this part critically examines common wisdoms in migration scholarship, such as the notion that migration governance in Europe is about immigration rather than emigration, or that it is characterised by a control gap.

The authors contributing to the Institutions part (II) consider which institutions shape the politics of migration in Europe. They ponder whether the impact of the courts is more substantial in Europe than elsewhere, and whether EU institutions exercise restrictive or liberalising influences on EU member states. Finally, they zoom in on political processes – specifically, addressing whether anti-immigrant politics shape European party politics in ways that are particular to the continent and whether immigrants in Europe have access to political institutions to a greater degree than in other parts of the world.

The part dealing with Integration (III) proposes several approaches to this very European concept. The authors discuss how European nation-states deal with being, or becoming, immigration countries and how useful ‘national models of integration’ are to understanding similarities and differences, or convergences and divergences among them. Furthermore, this part presents debates on citizenship and civic integration policies as policy instruments to regulate belonging in Europe. Moreover, the authors also debate how legal, economic and cultural hierarchies of belonging stratify access to specific rights, such as family reunification.

The Irregular Migration part (IV) examines contemporary border and identity politics, as well as governance of migration through risk and security in Europe. While Europe is not unique in terms of experiencing irregular migration flows, it has arguably been unique in terms of the political responses it has designed thus far to address the mixed migration flows towards the continent and deal with persons without regulated status. Indeed, the integration of the European single market and the construction of the EU as an ‘area of freedom, security and justice’ has created a different context in which policy-making operates in this domain, with EU-made policies and practices having external effects beyond its territory. The authors in this part present the dominant themes, actors, policies, practices and dynamics related to how irregular migration has been conceptualised and dealt with more broadly across Europe.

The part on Asylum and International Protection (V) examines the institutional, legal and political dimensions of asylum seeking and refugee protection in Europe. The discussion is situated in the history of forced displacement on the continent and Europe’s role in the construction of the international refugee regime. The authors present various aspects related to the politics of humanitarian migration in Europe, while entertaining questions of solidarity and the harmonisation of asylum seeking, and the limitations of the regional protection system in the EU.

The part on Labour Migration (VI) in the European context adds to understandings of Europe as special or unique in this area, given not only its policies regarding labour migration, but also the impact of immigration on European economies and societies. That impact is often misrepresented in political and public discourses. The authors provide an overview of several ideas, misconceptions and research puzzles that dominate economically oriented scholarship on immigration in Europe, including an analysis of how the politics of migrant care work is shaped by intersecting care regimes and migration regimes.

The part on Pan-European Cooperation on Migration (VII) considers various aspects of the uniquely European phenomenon of mixing external relations with immigration policies. The authors consider a range of tools used by European actors to shape mobility and migration geographies on the continent. They also examine the complexity of European cooperation arrangements, including the migration and development agenda, which primarily has been developed on the European continent.

Finally, the Handbook closes with a short part on Researching Migration in Europe (VIII). This part focuses on peculiarities of data collection and analysis, as well as methodological approaches across the continent. It sheds light on pan-European efforts to make comparative studies possible, but also showcases uniquely European advances in methodologies of migration research.

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