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Editorial introduction to special issue: Migration state in practice

Introduction

If the 20th century has been called “the age of migration” (Castles & Miller, 1993), how can we describe the current times, when the processes of population movement are even more rapid, uncontrolled, on an unprecedented scale, and often accompanied by crises of different levels and forms? Traditional destination regions such as the US, Australia, and the European Union are experiencing constant migratory pressure caused by an increasing influx of migrants pushed out of their places of residence not only by economic reasons and aspirations for a better life but also by persecution, wars, and environmentally-induced changes. Today, both the old and new transit and receiving countries still face the same challenges as they did in the past, such as border management, control of migration flows, integration of migrants, or cohesion of multicultural societies. These days these challenges have lost none of their relevance; on the contrary, they have become even more critical at a time when migration processes are more global, more complex, more dynamic, and more unpredictable. Furthermore,

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despite the development of supra-state migration systems, such as the Schengen Area in the EU or inter-state regulations, the national state is still the most important player on the global “migration scene”.

In the present reality, the question formulated by James Hollifield (2000) in the title of his text “The politics of international migration. How can we ‘Bring the state back in?’” still remains valid. He called for the restoration of the state’s place in migration research through the development of theories, concepts, and research approaches existing in political science and related disciplines to explain convincingly the relationship between the state and migration processes. Hollifield (1992, 2004) framed the concept of “migration state” and systematically developed it under the influence of the critical opinions that pointed, among other things, to an overly western-centric approach and focused only on one type of migration inflows – labour workers (see: Adamson & Tsourapas, 2020; Natter, 2018; Sadiq & Tsourapas, 2021). In Hollifield’s view, the “migration state” is constituted by two kinds of forces: the economic interests (the needs of the labour market and demand for foreign workers) and the rights of migrants (protection of individual rights according to the rule of liberal democracy). When implementing migration policy, the state must reconcile (sometimes conflicting) interests of the economy and the logic of rights. In time, the additional goal of “migration state” became a priority – ensuring the state’s security and its inhabitants’ economic well-being. The increasing migratory pressure and cultural diversity of newcomers create additional challenges for the host state, such as social and cultural cohesion (Hollifield & Foley, 2022).

One of the processes that require more attention is the impact of different forms of crisis (economic, political, military, and related to global health) on both migration flows and on how migration is governed. If the previous scholarship on migration state focused on the “normal” times and the economy-stimulated premises of labour migration, later contributions underline that not all migration is voluntary, but the opposite – instabilities are encompassing more regions which in turn induces more forced migration. So far, the COVID-19 pandemic disbursed a balance between rights, economy and security, causing border closure and other mobility restrictions. It is not yet clear whether this is a critical juncture in the further development of global migration processes and policies or just a short-term disturbance in the previous patterns.

One of Hollifield’s best-known concepts (1992) is “liberal paradox”. It explains the contradictory powers related to immigration, which each destination state has to reconcile. On the one hand, the needs of the economy and labour market (demand for foreign workers as a low-cost labour force) require openness of the state to migrant inflows. On the other, the fundamental need for social and cultural cohesion of society as well as security requires the closure of the state borders to the people influx. This clear contradiction between possible economic gains and politico-cultural threats defines the frontiers of the state’s migration policy. It creates the space within which governments design the legal rules and practices related to admission, settlement, and integration. The predominance of cultural concerns is inevitably linked to the growing role of the migration-security nexus. The September 2001 terrorist attacks in the US and the following terrorist attacks in Europe, made a rapid shift in how migrants started to be perceived by both the governments and public opinion. Particularly, it concerned migrants from Islamic countries. In this context, Western societies

were more eager to perceive migration as a threat to their national and cultural identity as well as social stability (Holilfield & Foley, 2022).

The concepts of “migration state” and “liberal paradox” have also been the starting points for the Authors of the articles included in this issue. They confirm that there is a variety of empirical research and analyses on the relationship between the state and migration that goes beyond the classical approach, looking at the migration and integration policy from the different levels, not only the national state but also sub-national and international ones. The Authors also develop creatively new perspectives in the study of the state-migration relationship – regarding the role of security, demography, human rights, and migrant communities.

The two articles that open the issue concern the two countries described in the literature as “classical” examples of immigration states: Australia and Canada. Both countries are “mature” because of their long tradition of migration inflows and migration governance. They also serve as perfect examples of “liberal paradox” and how challenging it is for the state authorities to deal with it successfully. **Jan Pakulski** portrayed current Australia facing the challenges of managing migration and reconciliation of different interests related to the economy (demand for foreign labour force), demography (problem of ageing society), integration (based on the idea of multiculturalism), and security (growing migration pressure and increasing phenomenon of people smuggling). The Author describes the Australian system of immigration management as always being “state-controlled” and “state-regulated”. He explains three main channels of legal immigration (for skilled migrants, family members, and refugees), which serve as selection streams and regulate the inflows of foreigners to Australia; each of them has different rules of entry, settlement, and integration facilities. The Author summarising the Australian migration strategy says openly that even if it is not “universally valid and applicable [...], the successes of this strategy make it interesting and relevant for other societies”.

Canada, a country’s case presented in the second article in this volume, is another example of a success story. **Iwona Wrońska** studies the evolution of Canadian immigration policy, which also faced similar challenges as Australia related to economy, demography, and multicultural society. In her article, she describes the unique refugee relocation and resettlement system designed and adopted in Canada in the mid-1970s. This system is founded on the private sponsorship programme, allowing individuals and local communities to be engaged in refugee accommodation with the authorities based on partnership. It is considered a good practice and, as such, followed by other states. What is worth mentioning is that both Authors pay attention to the pragmatic and utilitarian (rather than ideological) character of immigration policy implemented by Australian and Canadian authorities as well as practical adjustment to changing social conditions and various challenges, regardless of the political orientation of successive governments.

Another article in this volume shows an alternative case to the previous two. **Meltem Yilmaz Sener** presents Turkey and its rich history as an emigration, immigration, and transit country. Turkey represents the regional power with strong connections to both Europe and the Global South, and is an especially interesting case for several reasons: the dynamic of migration flows, its geographical position as the main

transit country on the migrants' way from Asia and Africa to the European Union, and the host country for refugees from Syria and other countries. She discusses how Turkish authorities tried to manage migration flows during different historical periods since the 1950s. Following the typology introduced by Adamson and Tsourapas (2020), the Author presents Turkey's evolution as a migration state and distinguishes four periods: from a nationalising, through a developmentalist and an early neoliberal migration to a late neoliberal migration state. She considered not only the migration flows but also the importance of other factors influencing state policy such as remittances, foreign investments, engagement of the Turkish diaspora, and recently – the politicisation of migration issues by the authorities.

The two last articles touch upon different levels of migration management – beyond and below the national state. **Dorota Heidrich** and **Justyna Nakonieczna-Bartosiewicz** explore the conditions and context of the possible impact of state policy on the international refugee regime. They concentrate on Poland's case and examine the evolution of the country's engagement and approach towards the international system of protection for asylum seekers since the early 1990s. The Authors focus on the recent period when the Polish rightist government shifted towards open anti-immigrant rhetoric and accelerated the politicisation of migration-related topics. It was especially visible in 2015 (refugee/migration crisis) and 2022 (humanitarian crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border), when the reinterpretation of the formative norms of the international refugee regime (the right to protection and principle of non-refoulement) took place by the Polish government. The Authors explain how it may destabilise the international refugee regime and why this pessimistic scenario has not materialised.

The last article in this volume concentrates on the sub-national level. **Jacek Kubera** deliberates on the relations between immigrant communities (and their organisations) and the country of settlement and examines the influence of the integration policy framework on these relations. By using the case of Polish diaspora organisations in France, he illustrates the evolution of the traditional republican integration model, based on secularism and the official rule of non-recognition of migrant and ethnic communities by the French state. The Author's original field research confirms the paradox of French integration policy. In practice, the lack of legal recognition of immigrant organisations is not an obstacle to being represented in the public sphere and achieving their goals. Moreover, immigrant leaders and organisations have the potential to modify the legal and institutional framework of integration policy from the bottom up.

All articles in this issue show a reflection on the relationship between the state and international migration from various perspectives, focusing, in particular, on the influx of people and their (non)reception in countries under study and the national responses. They discuss how the issue of migration and its management has gained importance over the years, no less than economic or security issues. Hollifield's concepts, despite critical voices, are still an essential point of reference for today's and future discussions about the state and migration in a rapidly changing reality. Sometimes, the most obvious approaches are the most timeless, and their conceptualisation evolves as we observe the world around us.

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