Spreading securitization: the Syrian Refugees Crisis and the Turkey’s Foreign Policy Agenda

Dr. FEDERICO DONELLI
Department of Political Science (DISPO) - University of Genoa (Italy).
e-mail: federico@donelli.it

ARIEL GONZALEZ LEVAGGI, Ph. D. Candidate
Koç University Istanbul (Turkey)
e-mail: agonzalez14@ku.edu.tr

Abstract
The ongoing civil war in Syria have prompted waves of forced migrants which have been perceived as a threat for the internal stability and security, both in Middle East and Europe. Nowadays, the political and humanitarian costs of the crisis are being paid mainly by Syria’s neighbors - Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey – who currently hosting over 4.5 million recognized refugees. In this dramatic context, this externality has affected Ankara seriously. Turkey is currently hosting the largest number of refugees worldwide, while the vast majority of these are Syrians (2.7 million). The effects on Turkey of the refugee inflow from Syria can be evaluated in different dimensions: social, economic, political, and security. The convergence of all these factors sets not only domestic challenges for Ankara’s government, but it also concerns for the overall Turkish foreign policy, in particular in its relation with the European Union.

Drawing on the securitization framework, we focus the analysis on the nexus between migration and security, by evaluating how the refugee flow from Syria has impacted in the Turkey’s foreign policy agenda, and the relations with the West. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the conceptual nexus between the forced mass movement of people and foreign policy. The initial assertion is, that the refugee’s flows from Syria has provoked a change both in policy-makers and society, thus securitization the overall foreign policy agenda, beyond the refugee issue itself.

In the first part, we evaluated the regional security dilemma after the crisis in Syria. Then, we analyze repercussions on Turkey’s foreign policy of Syrian refugees. Finally, drawing on the arguments about the securitization of the Ankara’s foreign policy agenda, we present an outline of the Turkey’s role in the context of an increasingly conflictive regional security dilemma.

Keywords: Turkey; Syria; refugee; securitization Foreign Policy, Middle East