İnceleme Makalesi

Politicization and Instrumentalization of Migration Research: Ethical Challenges[1]

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Abstract

Migration research has received remarkable attention in the last decade, and it has become a central research field in which researchers widely adopt qualitative research methods. Research practices such as ethnographic studies adopting micro perspectives and bottom-up approaches necessitate a detailed analysis. Related methodological issues and ethical concerns are waiting to be unpacked in a comprehensive and critical way. From a critical perspective, this article discusses the relationship between research methodology and ethical challenges based on asymmetrical power relations, positionalities of researcher and participants, and the problem of over-research. It is argued that global transformations and migration policies have a profound impact on migration research and might cause an instrumentalization of it. The instrumentalization of the researched populations works in a complex set of asymmetrical relationships in different contexts based on the perception of migration as a security threat. It eventually produces ethical concerns over researchers' epistemological and methodological perspectives. These ethical problems occur in a politically dynamic setting. Therefore, questioning the political aspects of the production of scientific knowledge and the positionality of the researcher have the capacity to challenge the mainstream perception of migration and the instrumentalization of migration research.

Keywords: Migration Research, Ethics, Asymmetrical Power Relations, İnstrumentalization, Positionality.

Review Article

Göç Araştırmalarının Siyasallaştırılması ve Araçsallaştırılması: Etik Sorunlar

Öz

Göç araştırmaları son on yılda kayda değer bir ilgi görmüş, sosyal bilimler içerisinde nitel araştırma yöntemlerinin yaygın olarak kullanıldığı merkezi bir araştırma alanı haline gelmiştir. Bu bağlamda, özellikle mikro düzeyde olan ve tümevarımsal yaklaşımları benimseyen etnografik çalışmalar gibi araştırma pratikleri detaylı bir analiz gerektirmektedir. Bu tür çalışmalarla ilgili metodolojik meseleler ve etik kaygılar daha kapsamlı ve eleştirel bir şekilde ele alınmayı beklemektedir. Bu makale eleştirel bir perspektiften asimetrik güç ilişkileri, araştırmacı ve katılımcıların konumsallıkları ve aşırı-araştırma sorunu temelinde araştırma metodolojisinin etik sorunlarla olan ilişkisini tartışmaktadır. Çalışmanın temel argümanı küresel değişim ve dönüşümler ile birlikte küresel göç politikalarının alandaki araştırmaları derin bir biçimde etkilemesi ve göç araştırmalarının araçsallaştırılmasına neden olmasıdır. Göç çalışmalarının araştırma evrenini oluşturan grupların araçsallaştırılmalarıyla birlikte, göçün bir güvenlik tehdidi olarak algılanmasına dayalı farklı bağlamlarda iç içe geçmiş bir dizi asimetrik ilişkiler bütünü ortaya çıkmaktadır. Böylesi bir durum, araştırmacıların epistemolojik ve metodolojik perspektiflerini kapsayan etik sorunlar doğurmakta ve politik olarak devimsel bir ortamda cereyan etmektedir. Dolayısıyla, bilimsel bilgi üretiminin politik çehresinin ve araştırmacının konumsallığının sorgulanması, göçün güvenlik çerçevesinde oluşan anaakım kavranışını ve göç araştırmalarının araçsallaştırılmasını da tartışmaya açmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Göç Araştırmaları, Etik, Asimetrik Güç İlişkileri, Araçsallaştırma, Konumsallık.

Introduction

Migration is not a new phenomenon, and it has a long history. People have migrated from one region to another since the emergence of Homo Sapiens about 150,000 years ago (Donato & Massey, 2016). However, migration has had a new transatlantic character since the sixteenth-century European expansion to mass migrations from Europe to North America between the mid-nineteenth century to 1914 (Castles & Miller, 2009). For instance, in her famous poem *The New Colossus,* Jewish American poet Emma Lazarus wrote about this "transatlantic migration" from Europe to North America in 1883 by underlining its political character.[3] Lazarus described the Statue of Liberty as the "Mother of Exiles" at that time while comparing it with the Colossus of Rhodes which was believed to symbolize victory against enemies. In contrast, she described the Statue of Liberty as a symbol of its call to the European lands: "Give me your tired, your poor/Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." Since that time, the perspective on international migration has changed extraordinarily.

Donato & Massey (2016) categorize modern times into three eras of mass human migration shaped by economic changes. The first era is characterized by European colonial expansion from 1500 to 1800. The second era is distinguished by European industrialization from 1800 to the 1929 Great Depression, which is also the first stage of capitalist globalization. The third era lies in the second era of capitalist globalization, which began to take root between the end of World War II and the beginning of neo-liberalization in the 1970s and 1980s, when international migration expanded to all regions. For Donato & Massey, this current era has witnessed a new type of institutionalization of global trade and investment through multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (2016, p. 8). After the impact of globalization and technological advancements in communication and transportation, international migration became a pivotal element of our current era, Castles & Miller (2009) call "the age of migration."

This article aims to illuminate the politicization and instrumentalization of migration research[4] with its connection to significant shifts in the perception of international migration. Relevant research articles, and reports, including data collected by local and international organizations, are used in the study. In the first part, the review of migration research in Türkiye and methodological frameworks of migration research are discussed in terms of their political aspects.

In the remaining parts of the article ethical challenges regarding before, during, and after migration research are discussed in two sections. First, asymmetrical power relations and potential hierarchy between the researcher

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[3] Lazarus, E. (1883). The New Colossus by Emma Lazarus. Poetry Foundation. Retrieved January 10, 2023, from https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46550/the-new-colossus

[4] In this article, migration research mainly refers to international migration rather than internal migration.

and the participants are discussed. Following this section, the problem of over-research in migration research is examined referring to different over-researched community examples. These examples are chosen attempting to show how trust-building relations between researcher and participants are affected by the problem of over-research. Ethical challenges examined in this study mainly focus on qualitative research that adapts micro-level perspectives and bottom-up approaches, such as ethnographic studies.

The New Colossus Turns into the Colossus of Rhodes

The changes in migration types and policies and the emergence of migration management perspectives deeply shape migration research, and might cause instrumentalization of it. Labour demand in Western European countries after the Second World War and the rise of globalization in the 1990s are two historical milestones in international migration. The first mobility is related to regional inequalities between the Global North and Global South. The economy-oriented neoclassical theories grasp migration as mobility from low-income to high-income areas or "push-pull" theories, and better living opportunities or lifestyles have a role in migrants' decision to migrate (Sert, 2012). However, neither the portrait of migrants as rational individuals who have freedom of choice in the "market" nor the "push-pull" perspective on migration, which neglects the role of states, provides an adequate theoretical framework for migration (Castles & Miller, 2009).

The changing trends in international migration since the 1980s, the economic crises of the 1970s, and neoliberal policies limited labour migration to the Western states (Castles & Miller, 2009). Additionally, the financial crash of 2008 became another significant factor which has led to increasing national border control and restrictions (Castles, 2010). The twenty-first-century globalization has created a global economy based on the flow of capital but restricts human mobility by controlling international migration. This situation creates what Donato & Massey (2016) call "the paradox of twenty-first-century globalization."

These social, political and economic transformations have also influenced the terminology used in migration research. Triandafyllidou (2010) states that "irregular", "illegal" and "undocumented" are used to describe "migrants", "immigrants", "aliens" or "foreign nationals". These terms appeared in different times and contexts and have different meanings underlying them. As such, the terms of "illegal" or "irregular" migration primarily reflects the perspective of states rather than migrants' experiences if they are adopted without a critical assessment (Erder & Yükseker, 2014, p. 46). The critical assessment may develop alternative usage of the term "irregular migration" to refer to the relationship between migrants' legal status and human rights (Erder & Yükseker, 2014). Moreover, the term "illegal migration" is criticized by migration scholars in terms of its discriminatory aspect; therefore, such criticism is parallel to the view of "no human being is illegal" (Triandafyllidou, 2010, p.

2). In this context, the terms "irregular migration" and "undocumented migrant" are used in a more neutral way to describe this type of migrants who lack of required legal papers to enter or reside in accordance with the rules (Triandafyllidou, 2010). The way researchers define and use these terms affects the unit of analysis and sampling in migration research (Kümbetoğlu, 2012). Moreover, Castles argues that migration should be grasped as a part of social transformation with its link to the global political, economic, and social relationships instead of a "problem that needs to be 'fixed' by appropriate policies" (2010, p. 1567).

Although some countries welcomed the early impacts of globalization and the growing mobility of individuals with terms such as multiculturalism with all its different understandings (Castles & Davidson, 2000), the other side of the coin implies a dark path. For instance, the terrorist attacks called 9/11 became another historical milestone to shape the perspective on international migration. Emma Lazarus' "The New Colossus," whose hand "glows worldwide welcome," turned into a symbol of defense and victory -the Colossus of Rhodes- with the "war on terror" discourse under the George W. Bush administration and has deeply affected the dynamics of international migration. This discourse profoundly influenced the process of the securitization of migration and the perception of international migration as a part of "transnational threats," essentially widening the scale of "the migration-security nexus" (Faist, 2005). Intensification of border controls by surveillance and technological advancements marked a shift in state border control practices as an impact of 9/11 in twenty-first-century globalization (Andreas, 2003). These border control practices and surveillance technologies are also what Bigo (2014) calls "the practices of (in)securitization."

Migration researchers are affected by these macro-economic, social and political transformations. For instance, Wimmer & Glick-Schiller (2002) historically portray how migration research has been influenced by global changes from the 1870s to the beginning of the twenty-first century. In this sense, researcher's perception is affected by the naturalization of a global regime of nation-states, namely *methodological nationalism*. In light of these discussions, Castles & Miller urge us to "reconceptualize migration as a complex process in which economic, political, social and cultural factors all work together" (2009, p. 25). The dynamic nature of these factors also necessitates a reconsideration of theoretical and methodological frameworks as well as ethical challenges.

Political Nature of Migration Studies in Türkiye

Since the mid-nineteenth century Türkiye has witnessed migration flows that affect its social and political structure (Özbay & Yücel, 2001). Forced migration between 1923-1950, labor migration between 1950-1980, and changing aspects of migration, which were influenced by the 1980 military coup and globalization, imply the political impact on migration in the country (Özbay & Yücel, 2001). In this sense, migration research has

always been a political issue for Türkiye. Erder & Yükseker (2014) critically evaluate migration studies in Türkiye regarding theoretical implications, methodology, and research areas. They argue that although Turkey has witnessed a wide range of immigration and emigration since the late Ottoman Empire, migration studies in Türkiye are limited based on taboo subjects, the lack of financial support and theoretical frameworks derived from Western Europe and the lack of adequate theoretical concepts grasping the social change and the diverse migration patterns in Türkiye (Erder & Yükseker, 2014, p. 36). Their periodization of migration issue in Türkiye from the 1920s to 1950s, 1960s to 1980s, and 1990s to present is parallel to the global history of migration research and worldwide events such as labor demand of Western European countries after the Second World War and the growing impact of globalization on the growth of migration research.

Migration research is mainly traced back to the 1960s in Türkiye when it was concentrated on the issue of labor migration to Western European countries. The decision of "export of excessive manpower" was made by the Turkish government following the 1960 military coup to overcome problems such as unemployment, population growth and social tensions (Abadan-Unat, 2011, xxii). The interest of state organizations, such as the State Planning Organization's encouragement to collect data on labor migrants in West Germany in 1963 is related to the political aspect of migration research and collection of data on labor migrants (Abadan-Unat, 2011). The growth of migration research after the 1990s is based on diverse patterns of international migration as a result of globalization and reconsidering theoretical approaches to international migration, as well as the EU's growing interest in population movements through Türkiye with the motivation to develop policies to prevent migration flows to the EU countries.

Türkiye has experienced different migration flows since the nineteenth century. Migration from the Caucasus (Sunata, 2020) and the Balkans in the 1800s (Özbay & Yücel, 2001) are two major examples in this time period. Another significant migration flow was the resettlement of a quarter millions of Turks from Bulgaria to Türkiye in the early 1950s (Kostanick, 1955). In this period, migration from rural to urban areas in Türkiye also increased significantly as a result of the modernization policies in agriculture (Özbay & Yücel, 2001). The restrictive immigration and asylum policies in Western Europe in the 1980s and 1990s led to an increase in transit migration to Türkiye from different regions, such as Asia, Africa and the Middle East (İçduygu, 2006). In the 1990s, significant number of migrants from former Soviet Union countries began to come to Türkiye for different reasons such as trade, work or education (İçduygu, 2006). Starting from 2011, Türkiye also experienced Syrian migration flows, especially in 2015 (İçduygu & Şimşek, 2016). The ongoing externalization of the EU's migration policies also impacts migration flows to Türkiye due to its geographical location (Sert & Danış, 2020). Additionally, these migration flows to Türkiye highlight the labour aspect of migration with the levels

of employment in sectors of the informal economy, especially from the post-Soviet countries (İçduygu, 2006) and Syria (Belanger & Saraçoğlu, 2020; ILO, 2020). In light of these discussions, this article argues that the political nature of migration studies goes hand in hand with the instrumentalization of migration studies and the theoretical and methodological set of frameworks implemented in the research. Therefore, these implications produce ethical concerns and challenges for researchers.

Qualitative Methodology and Ethical Challenges in Migration Research

Migration from a "management" perspective has produced policy-oriented research practices (Castles, 2010). These policy-oriented practices lead to the domination of the view of states instead of the experiences of migrants. For example, the 2021 report of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) illustrates how countries manage migration data using different administrative sources. However, Scheel & Ustek-Spilda (2019) underline the limits of quantifying migration and the use of multiple methods constituting multiple migration realities by arguing that how migration management aims to enact migration "as a reality that can be managed" (p. 665). Moreover, quantitative research adapting methods such as surveys may have some limitations, including the type of survey questions and the lack of unregistered people in official records or databases (Kümbetoğlu, 2012). Additionally, there can be restrictions on some official migration-related data, or quantitative data collected by state authorities (e.g., statistics and state archives) may not be accurate in all cases for researchers (Erder & Yükseker, 2014). In this respect, qualitative methodology unpacks the invisible nature of migrants' experiences, especially for undocumented migrants.. It also provides researchers to unpack and challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions in migration research. Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz explain why the qualitative approach is essential in migration research as follows:

> Qualitative migration researchers have a key role in demonstrating the constructed nature of the categories such as 'migrant', 'undocumented', 'citizen', 'border' and so on. Even though these categories are socially and politically produced, they have real material effects on how states and societies are organised. QR [Qualitative Research], through a bottom-up knowledge production process, has a distinctive advantage in exploring how these constructed migration categories are perceived and experienced in the everyday life of individuals, organisations, and institutions (…) Avoiding traditional hierarchies between researchers and participants and recognising migrants as co-producers of migration knowledge will be an important step toward democratising migration research and its methodological tools (2022, p. 420).

Thus, qualitative research has the potential to fill the gap in relevant migration data and shed light on the invisible nature of the field as well as limitations related to ethical challenges. However, qualitative and quantitative

research on migration is at risk of being influenced by the policy-oriented management perspective. The risk highlights the need to question the validity and reliability of the data by researchers. These ethical challenges are related to the instrumentalization of migration research in terms of asymmetrical power relations between the researcher and participants.

Asymmetrical Power Relations and Reflexivity

"For the first time back then, I thought about everything seriously.

The past and the future, both equally unknowable, and also this ongoing situation that

the consulates call "transitory" but that we know in everyday language as 'the present.'"

Anna Seghers, *Transit*[5]

The relationship between researcher and research participants regarding the role of inequality and potential hierarchy is widely discussed in the literature (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Frers & Meier, 2022). In this sense, the power dynamics between researcher and participants are significant because these power dynamics that may produce asymmetrical relations are central to the data collection and research findings (Kvale, 1996; Düvell et al. 2010). In Understanding, Bourdieu (1999) urges researchers to be aware of these asymmetrical power relations due to the different amounts of capital the researchers and participants have. Linguistic capital, for instance, is one of the capitals that Bourdieu highlighted in his article; therefore, interview protocols or survey questions need to be examined closely based on these power relations, especially in the case of language barriers. Additionally, these asymmetrical power relations begin in the research design and continue during and after the research, and as the ethical obligations. For instance, researchers may have a particular picture in their minds before the research, which could deeply affect the research theory and methodology. It will also consequently affect the research findings due to the research bias. Thus, Clark-Kazak (2017) suggests adding different perspectives to research. These different perspectives could be class, gender, age, or ethnicity. Nonetheless, the instrumentalization of participants falls beyond these aspects and could emerge in different research practices. In this sense, the positionality of the researcher affects the research process. For instance, Ong (1995) explains how her positionality as a Chinese woman in the West had an impact on her research with Chinese immigrant women living in the US. In this sense, she underlines the importance of postcolonial feminist critique and building trust relationships by having a shared condition.

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[5] Seghers, A. (1951/2013). *Transit*. (M.B. Dembo, Trans.). New York, NY: New York Review Book, p. 146.

Our sense of having been shaped by the history of Western imperialism and diaspora out of China and by being Chinese women in the West made possible a situation of telling and listening. This lessening of the personal and pedagogical distance between the ethnographer and the informant allows an intimacy that nurtures trust and increases the informants' power to influence the ethnographic product (Ong, 1995, p. 355).

In this vein, she invites us not only to rethink the power relations between researcher and participants but also to rethink the concept of power to build trust relationships with research participants. From a similar perspective, Wolf (1996) highlights that power inequalities and hierarchies are continuously created during and after fieldwork in relation to different positionalities of the researcher and the participants.

The increase in the number of female migrants between 1965 and 1990 was higher than the number of male migrants (UNDP, 2009). The total number of female migrants is around 135 million, with 48.1% globally (UN DESA, 2020). However, migration theories and research have focused on especially male migrants for a long time. The 1960s and 1970s' male perspective-dominated theories have started to change since the 1980s, especially as a result of feminist studies (Schrover & Moloney, 2013). Moreover, Coşkun et al. (2020) draw attention to both the invisibility of women's experiences in migration studies and the central role of women in migration experiences in general, such as the decision making process of migration. They argue that feminist methodology provides a ground for researchers to problematize asymmetrical power relations regarding the production of scientific knowledge and the relations between the researcher and the researched, which enables scientific knowledge to have a role in social change and recognition of migrants' agency against the instrumentalization of them. Thus, feminist methodology urges us to not only to question asymmetrical power relations in migration research based on gender but also critically examine the international migration regime, the position of researchers, and the broader dynamics within social sciences.

Some other ethical challenges, however, may occur in different contexts. The participants may expect that their participation in the research will directly benefit their financial or legal status. The hope of direct benefit may lead to violating ethical principles or producing ethical dilemmas (Düvell et al., 2010). Clark-Kazak (2017, p. 12) states that displaced people's[6] dependence on service providers such as civil society or state organizations and sponsors may call into question the "voluntary" aspect of research, especially when people who work at

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[6] According to the International Organization for Migration (2019, p.55), displaced persons refer to "Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, either across an international border or within a State, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters."

these institutions are gatekeepers. For instance, they may believe it is obligatory to participate in the research in fear of deportation or worsening their status because they may believe that they lose their protection or support networks. Kümbetoğlu (2012) highlights the importance of informed consent to prevent such direct benefit expectations of research participants. Therefore, the principle of voluntary participation in research has its ethical obligations. Although signing a written consent form is the primary option for researchers, some participants' repeated experiences with officials may lead to finding written forms suspicious (Clark-Kazak, 2017), or language barriers may disrupt the process of obtaining both written or oral consent (Kümbetoğlu, 2012). Moreover, Klykken (2021) states that informed consent requires a continuous and reflexive engagement before, during and after fieldwork. Kirsch (1999, p. 3) puts reflexivity as one of the significant feminist principles of research because "it enables researchers to be introspective, to analyze the research process in response to participants, and to adjust and refine their research goals as they learn more about those they study."

The ethical responsibility for concerning the physical, social, and psychological well-being of research participants and reducing risks to researcher's safety lies with the researchers (BSA,2017). In this context, another ethical challenge is related to the possibility of re-traumatization of participants. Displaced people could have painful experiences of conflict or violence, or they may carry the feeling of personal or collective traumas. Collective trauma is described as a set of reactions triggered by a traumatic event that has a position in the collective memory, even for the people who did not directly experience the event (Hirschberger, 2018). A wide range of events, such as different types of wars and natural disasters, could be examples. Researchers' questions regarding these traumatic experiences could end up as recalling these painful experiences. Additionally, displaced people may need to tell their stories time after time in the process of asylum or other bureaucratic processes. It is significant to consider this situation to minimize psychological harm. Moreover, researchers also at risk of being affected by the traumatic experiences of the participants, and hostile or dangerous experiences in the research field (Bryman, 2012; Düvell et al., 2010; Lavin et al., 2012). For such migration research contexts, Düvell et al. (2010) also urge researchers to take criminal activities and health risks into consideration, especially if the research field includes people involved in criminal activities such as "human smugglers, illegal agents and corrupt officials" (p. 232).

The privacy of the participant is another ethical principle. It is crucial to keep the anonymity of the participants regarding their names or any other identifying characteristics. In some cases, with a small sample, age, occupation, or nationality information could also reveal the participants' identities. According to Coşkun et al. (2020, p.75), migrants' way of coming to the country, or the working and living conditions of the participants, could be considered "criminal" or "illegal" by states, especially for undocumented migrants. Information on their

identities in research outputs may lead to deportation or violence against the disadvantaged groups among migrants such as children, women, and LGBTI+s *(Ibid).*

After a study is conducted, power relations are still present. Ethical concerns over the dissemination of the research findings may emerge in terms of the way participants are portrayed, the timing of the dissemination, its media coverage, or the potential consequences of the results for the participants (Düvell et al., 2010). For instance, external funding provided by state organizations and various NGOs may affect the knowledge production process, and they can result in the detection of particular migrant or refugee groups or increase pressure on these groups (Kümbetoğlu, 2012). In this vein, the instrumentalization of migration research can include research design, data collection process and the dissemination of research results. The position of the researcher regarding the issue requires a continuous evaluation of migration dynamics in different contexts. The problem of over-research may exacerbate these ethical concerns and various forms of inequalities.

More importantly, human rights are at the centre of ethical considerations in migration research. International human rights treaties and instruments produce a legal framework for the protection of all migrants against racial and gender discrimination (UNHCR, 2008). Although international migrants, regardless of their status, are entitled to the same international human rights as everyone else, they have a vulnerable position on the grounds of citizenship and accessing to fundamental rights and services (Grant, 2005). Therefore, ethical consideration also includes the exercise of human rights because "enjoyment of human rights is not limited to nationals" according to the general rule of the Human Rights Committee (UNHCR, 2008).

The Problem of Over-Researched Communities

Over-research is a significant issue in migration research. Often, there is a particular focus on some specific migrant populations by academics, civil society organizations, and researchers. According to a report by the Association for Migration Research (GAR, 2017) 44% of master's and doctorate-level postgraduate research conducted between 2016 and 2017 are about migration in Türkiye and focused on human mobility flows into the country. Additionally, nearly half of the theses (45%) concentrate on Syrian migrants in Türkiye. The particular focus, together with the wide range of external funding opportunities for research on particular populations or social groups, could eventually lead to conducting over-research on the experiences of "accepted" groups by the state. While a number of researchers are able to conduct their research as a result of available funding, their focus on the "accepted" migrant populations helps policy-making mechanisms. Migration research aims to benefit these populations by shedding light on their experiences, explaining their situations, drawing attention to their living and working standards, and contributing to the policy-making mechanisms. Nonetheless, such

externally funded studies are also criticized for their adverse impact on migration researchers to engage in "policy-driven consultancy work" (Castles, 2010, p. 1572). Moreover, over-research on particular groups harms the trust between researchers and participants and raises hesitations from the participants' perspective concerning the position of researchers in some cases.

Over-researched populations can vary in different contexts. Sukarieh & Tannock (2012) locate the problem of over-research as an "under-researched" topic in social sciences. They, for instance, focus on the over-researched residents of the Shatila Palestinian refugee camp in Beirut, Lebanon. In their article, the case of Ahmed as one of the camp's residents reflects the impact of over-research on these people. Ahmed says:

> [Researchers] lie most of the time. Sometimes I lie to them too...because I also have my own interests from research ...Sometimes we just create stories for them and protect our camp by saying what we want to be said and written even if it is not reality, and they say, 'Oh wow, interesting.' They have an individual aim, we have a community aim ... I would not answer anyone who asked about weapons, prostitution, drugs or anything (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2012, p. 13-14).

As can be seen in Ahmed's words, the residents of the camp put themselves and researchers into oppositional camps, which could be interpreted as they see the "individual aim" of researchers to benefit their careers and to collect data as "threats" to the "community aim" of maintaining their lives. The problem of over-research is related to the policy-oriented aspect of migration studies and unequal power dynamics between researchers and participants. Although it can also occur in a study of a community that has never been studied, the specific condition is rooted in past experiences. To overcome such challenges, the problem of over-research requires adopting different strategies in the trust-building process between researcher and participants.

Nimer (2019) focuses on the Syrian community in Türkiye as an example of "over-researched" populations and examines how the power dynamics between funding opportunities provided by the "Global North" and researchers in the "Global South" shape the research practices in Turkish institutions. She argues that research design, including the research topic and ethical procedures, is based on the perspective of Global North instead of the perspective of local researchers and particular conditions of participants. Similar to the case of Ahmed, another participant's words given by Nimer underline the perception of research by the over-researched populations: "We always talk and talk, nothing changes" (2019, par. 7). According to her, this nature of unequal power dynamics in terms of regional and research practices creates ethical concerns over the alienation of participants and local researchers. Moreover, Omata (2019) gives a similar example from his research on the

Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. After highlighting the aim of the research in a meeting as to "generate a better understanding of refugees" and "contribute to informing better policies," a resident of the camp responds, "Each time, we cooperated with researchers, but we have not seen an improvement in our life. I cannot trust what you said" (Omata, 2019, p. 15).

Sukarieh & Tannock (2012) argue that the problem of over-research should not be grasped as "a challenge or obstacle" waiting to be overcome by developing new methodological interventions or finding another community that is "under-researched." Instead, they put the problem as a part of research practices in social sciences and urge researchers to reconsider their relationship with the broader society "other than conducting further research on the lives of marginal and poor" (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2012, p. 507, original emphasis). Moreover, Bakewell (2008) argues that policy-relevant concerns of researchers limited their research to the perspective of policymakers in terms of concepts, migrant categories, research questions, and methodologies. Therefore, "policy irrelevant research" has the capacity to challenge the priorities of policymakers and taken-for-granted assumptions in migration research (Bakewell, 2008).

Conclusion

This article critically reflects on ethical challenges in migration research concerning politicization and instrumentalization. Economic, political, and social transformations profoundly shape migration experiences and policies. These policies imply a shift, especially with the impact of 9/11, in the perception of migration as a security threat. Therefore, migration is perceived as a problem to be managed by migration policies and border-control technologies. Such perspectives on migration influence the research in terms of research topics, the terminology used in the study, and theoretical perspectives adopted in the research. Although this article mainly deals with qualitative research such as ethnographic studies, migration research requires both qualitative and quantitative studies to combine micro-level experiences and macro-level data. Castles & Miller's (2009) suggestion of grasping migration in relation to the complex relationship between economic, social, political and cultural factors provides a holistic approach to migration. These complex set of relationships draw remarkable lines between gendered and racialized inequalities in unequal geographies of the global migration regime. Nonetheless, this article does not aim to portray migrants as "victims" or "passive agents". Migrants are active agents, for instance, in shaping cities (Çağlar & Glick Shiller, 2018) and in producing different strategies to overcome difficulties in a new setting, both in the case of international migration (Grabowska et al., 2017) and internal migration (Kalaycıoğlu & Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2000; Erder, 2002).

The instrumentalization of migration research is related to dynamics of external funding, asymmetrical power relations between the researcher and participants, as well as different forms of inequalities in terms of class, gender, race and ethnicity, and the problem of over-research in migration studies. All these aspects produce dynamic ethical challenges in different contexts and they require a critical assessment based on the ethical principles of minimizing physical and psychological risks, confidentiality, and trust relations. Human rights of all migrants are also at the heart of these ethical considerations. Additionally, the positionalities of the researcher and participants constitute another significant issue that shapes the power relations before, during, and after the fieldwork.

In the shadow of the politics of migration research, researchers' roles and positions in different stages of the study are also political. The relationship between researcher and participants is also dynamic because of the negotiation between them (Bott, 2010). Research topics, research questions, research design, data collection, and dissemination of results are part of these political dynamics because "methodological and epistemological choices are always also ethical and political choices" (Harding, 2006, p. 156). They shape and reflect how researchers see the world and grasp these complex dynamics simultaneously. In this sense, feminist methodology provides a ground for the co-production of migration knowledge and challenges power relations and hierarchies between researcher and participants. Therefore, questioning the political aspects of the production of scientific knowledge, the researcher's positionality, how and why such positions affect the research process, and questioning the influence of their research on wider society and politics are crucial for researchers. In this vein, the impact of migration research on the choice between building Emma Lazarus' New Colossus or the Colossus of Rhodes remains significant.

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