How is it that within a couple of short decades refugees in European public perception went from being the archetypal "heroes" of the international system—dissidents and fugitives fleeing communism and despotic regimes in search of freedom and individualism—to being a disparaged and unwanted "flood" of migrants: an apparently poverty-driven mass of asylum-seekers masking their motives behind false claims of persecution and clogging the migration capacity of overly generous Western legal systems and welfare states? By the mid-1990s the overwhelming numbers of those claiming asylum led to a wave of immigration restrictions—including the imposition of strict control mechanisms, the creation of mass detention centers, and the use of forced repatriation. It also led to a downgrading of the hard-won international norms of refugee recognition (dating back to the UN convention of 1951) into much less idealist regimes of temporary protection, remote control, and regional population containment.

Much of refugee studies today fail to respond adequately to this question. Dominated by a mix of short-term pragmatic policy imperatives and a naturally defensive humanitarian bias that seeks to protect the claims of "true" refugees from contamination with those of other migrants, the field lacks the analytical distance to capture the shifts in international politics that have rendered the idealist norms of the postwar refugee system ineffective. Emma Haddad's authoritative and sophisticated study provides exactly this kind of resource for rethinking refugee migration in a more complex post–cold war era. Haddad argues that the idealist human rights construction of the post-1951 order was in fact an anomalous episode in the treatment of refugees. This view overlooked the historical fact that refugees are an inevitable (albeit unfortunate) product of an international system of nation-state sovereignty that, by carving up populations into territorial jurisdictions that give rights and recognition according to citizenship status, always leaves certain peoples on the wrong side of borders or vulnerable to exclusion from basic rights.

The post–cold war world has returned us to a more complicated patchwork of new wars and fragmented sovereignties, in which protection norms based on individual human rights and well-founded claims of persecution are flatly inadequate to protect many vulnerable populations. Haddad argues that such claims of protection against the state ("negative sovereignty") will always
compete with the claims of ("positive") state sovereignty based on issues of security, social order, or other political imperatives. The question then becomes: What is to be done? Haddad argues that by recognizing the prevalence of the norm of state sovereignty, despite the practical limitations of states, it could be possible to expand, rather than contract or compromise, the notion of refugee protection. The sovereign claims of states are thus both the source of the problem and its potential solution when they accept that they should seek to restore a protective state/citizen relationship to vulnerable mobile or displaced populations.

Haddad is a rare example of a scholar whose efforts have included both academia and the highest level of international policy work; as such, she could hardly be better placed to speak of the ethical and political consequences of rethinking refugee protection. Strikingly, she takes a resolutely conceptual and normative approach to the analysis, arguing that conventional policy analysis and international relations have been part of the problem in not recognizing how and why the very category of "refugee" needs rethinking. Defining what a refugee truly is thus becomes an historical "question of semantics," charting an "essentially contested concept" that tries to "negotiate a way between the is and the ought" (p. 170). In this way, Haddad continually underlines the extent to which the use of the concept has always been normatively loaded and subject to political influence.

*The Refugee in International Society* also works as a comprehensive advanced introduction to refugee studies. Haddad identifies her approach with the English School of international relations, but her book clearly owes much to the pioneering studies of Aristide Zolberg, who first put the question of nation-state formation at the heart of the creation of refugee and migrant flows. She deftly synthesizes ideas that have been around in the literature (this is above all a very thoroughly referenced and intertextual work) but that have not been put together with this much cogency, or extended to their full implications. These implications are large because they suggest a revision of the 1951 framework to include all kinds of mobile and displaced populations, set adrift by nation-building and nation-dissolving processes. In this sense all migrants in today's porous world are disruptive "pollutants" in the official political carve-up of the earth into territorially divided nation-state citizenries—a world of homeless persons who (usually) may have an unproblematic right to exit their country but face a far more restricted right to enter and gain status in others.

This, of course, begs the question of where Haddad would limit the claims of refugee status. The distinguishing factor of the "true" refugee appears still to be the issue of "forced" migration versus the "choice" to move (of an economic migrant). This distinction is hard to sustain within a social ontology that, as here, characterizes all migrants' agency as born of social disadvantage, discrimination, and harsh economic necessity—in other words, as largely determined by broad forces out of their control. As Haddad points out, economic migration can be "forced" if it is a result of a state deliberately discriminating against or barring whole segments of the population from economic activity. Nevertheless, in the legal order we live in, for practical reasons only a small proportion of all migrants can be recognized officially as refugees; otherwise, the claims of those "really" deserving protection would have no moral or ethical weight.

There are problems, too, in always sympathizing or siding with the refugee, as this study does. For example, the usually valid feminist move of feminizing all pronouns is ambiguous in its results. Does identifying all refugees as "she," as Haddad does, stress their agency as women or rather cement an image of all refugees as powerless victims?

For all the necessary historical and contextual sensitivity to shifting semantics, we cannot ultimately avoid the moral issue of who deserves protection and who does not. The distinction will surely come back to something like the basic human rights–related standards of the postwar era, albeit extended...
in some of the directions Haddad suggests. Yet some refugees, as defined by Haddad, will be more deserving than others. By extending the "construct" of refugees ever more broadly we also dilute its imperative. Haddad's historical analysis reminds us, above all, of the cost of lacking principles: who gets to be designated as deserving is so often at the mercy of ideology and international power relations. The United States, for example, has been famously generous to certain refugees and not others: waves of mostly middle-class Croatians and Bosnians were given blanket access to U.S. citizenship during the 1990s, as were Nicaraguans and Cubans fleeing communism in the 1970s and 1980s, while at the same time Vietnamese and El Salvadorans were left to drown in their makeshift boats. No wonder the international refugee system has come to be so discredited.

Haddad is clearly looking to political and ethical norms for restoring some principles, and this is a book that above all displays strong convictions. But these convictions perhaps could have been better defined in terms of external notions of "decency," "justice," or "human rights." There is always the danger in applying a thorough, historicizing contextual logic, as Haddad does so effectively to the notions of "refugee" and "protection," that these ethical standards may appear to be equally "constructed" and flexible as well.

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