

WORK FORCE MIGRATION AND SOCIETAL SECURITY, TIME FOR A REASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT:

IN THE CONTEXT OF CURRENT GLOBALIZATION, THE MIGRATION CRISIS RESHAPES THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PATH OF MANY LOCAL COMMUNITIES MAINLY BY INFLUENCING SYSTEMATICALLY THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LABOR FORCE, FROM THE PROJECTION OF NATIONAL GROWTH STRATEGIES TO THE INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL ECONOMY. IN THIS CONTEXT MIGRANT WORKERS CAN REPRESENT BOTH A FRESH BREATH OF AIR FOR SUCH ECONOMIES OR A SOURCE OF SOCIAL UNREST FOR THE WHOLE SYSTEM IN THE HOST COUNTRY. EU'S STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK, DERIVED FROM ITS EUROPE 2020 AGENDA, IS ADDRESSING THESE PRIORITIES IN VERY BROAD TERMS, WITHOUT STRUGGLING TO ASSESS THE EFFECTS OF EACH PROGRAM UPON THEIR LOCAL OR REGIONAL BENEFACTORS.

OUR AIM IS TO EXPLOIT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LABOR FORCE REGULATION, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EDUCATION, IN AN ATTEMPT TO FIND THE BEST REFERENCES IN TERMS OF PREDICTABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY FOR SUCH MIGRANT WORKERS.

IT IS INTERESTING TO WATCH AND ANALYZE HOW EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WILL SUCCEED IN RECONCILING THE NEED FOR WORKFORCE WITH SECURITY POLICIES, REFERRING HERE IN PARTICULAR TO SOCIAL SECURITY POLICIES. IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION, IT IS IMPORTANT TO INVESTIGATE BOTH THE TOLERANCE OF THE STATE AND ITS CITIZENS REGARDING THIS PHENOMENON, AS WELL AS THE LEVEL OF ACCEPTANCE FROM THE IMMIGRANTS' PERSPECTIVE.

THIS PAPER EXAMINES, IN THE FIRST PHASE, THE RELATIONS BETWEEN MIGRANTS AND SECURITY BY TRYING TO PUT IN BALANCE THE BENEFITS OF MIGRANTS FOR THE LABOR MARKET AND THE RISKS, IN PARTICULAR, THE RISKS TO SOCIAL SECURITY. SECONDLY, WE WILL DISCUSS ABOUT SECURING THE PROBLEM OF MIGRANTS BY TRYING TO SEE HOW MEDIA INFLUENCES PUBLIC OPINION AND HOW IT CAN REDUCE TENSIONS AMONG LOCAL COMMUNITIES, THUS ADDRESSING SOCIETAL SECURITY ISSUES. THE ANALYSIS WILL FOCUS MAINLY ON ROMANIAN WORKERS AND THEIR ADAPTING MECHANISMS, AS MEANS OF INTEGRATION WITHIN THE SPANISH AND BRITISH LABOR MARKETS. WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA WHICH DETERMINE A GOOD FUNCTIONING FOR THIS RELATIONSHIP? HOW IS THE PUBLIC OPINION ACTUALLY FORMED, GIVEN THE INFLUENCE THAT MEDIA CAN HAVE ON THE DECISION-MAKERS, AND WHO HAS MORE LEVERAGE TO BOOST A FUNCTIONAL INTEGRATION SCENARIO FOR SUCH GROUPS? THE PURPOSE IS TO BUILD A COHESIVE SOCIETY IN WHICH PEOPLE ARE EMPOWERED TO ANTICIPATE AND MANAGE CHANGE, AND CAN ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN SOCIETY AND ECONOMY.

KEYWORDS: MIGRATION, SOCIETAL SECURITY, LABOR FORCE, SECURITIZATION.

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INTRODUCTION

"In recent years, the number of migrants has increased in volume, migratory flows have drawn the attention of security experts concerned with the effects of immense flows of migrants around the world".³ Migration flows have the potential to affect the power of a state, whether economic, military or diplomatic. Although migration has a lot of negative effects can also bring benefits in the sense that "states compete to harness well-educated and highly skilled migrant workers, particularly in areas such as information technology and the knowledge-based economy, two areas that represent assets and vectors of power in the context of globalization."⁴

Migrant workers can, to a lesser extent, increase the host state's strategy by providing technical expertise and specific information, and states can harness foreign groups to promote their interests globally. They are not seen only as people who may steal jobs but also it is believed that immigrants can arrive to European Union to improve their living standards because of social welfare systems. This exploitation is something Europeans fear, especially now after the economics of EU has suffered from great recession.⁵

Labor migration has gained momentum and is becoming increasingly important both for host and home countries due to the new dynamism of the global economy. With the possibility of free movement, starting January 1, 2002, after the renunciation of the visa regime for Romanian citizens traveling to the Schengen area, the phenomenon of leaving for work abroad has increased.

BETWEEN BENEFITS AND BURDEN

The number of international migrants, persons living in a country other than where they were born reached 244 million in 2015 for the world as a whole, a 41 % increase compared to 2000, according to new data presented by the United Nations.⁶ In Europe, cumulative demographic factors such as mortality and fertility loss affect the course of economic development. These demographic changes are most likely to induce doubts and uncertainty regarding the capacity of the state to actually address the consequences of an increased tax burden upon the social body, thus contribution to social insecurity. In short, the fear is that spending on old-age rights will continue to increase as there are fewer young people who can contribute to the tax base.

Not just Romania, but the whole of Europe is facing serious demographic problems and gloomy prospects. The long term projections shows signs that in 15-20 years the labor market will shrink while the health and pension budgets, supported mainly from the state budget, will increase.

Europe competes with other global players to attract qualified workforce, especially in key sectors such as science, technology, engineering and healthcare. If in the past we had a race to develop and maintain military strength, there is now a global race to attract talented brains from the highly developed economies of Europe, North America and Australia, and the emerging global economies. As a result, EU's "Migration Agenda" refers mainly to "high-skilled third-country migrants" and the need to "identify those economic sectors and

³ The top ten migrant-receiving countries are (in regional order): the United States, Canada, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Spain, Russia, Ukraine, Saudi Arabia and India (EUISS/ESPAS 2015)

⁴ Rudolph Christopher "Security and the Political Economy of International Migration", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 4 (November) (2003), 603-620.

⁵ Huysmans, Jef. "The European Union And The Securitization Of Migration" *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 38.5 (2000), 767.

⁶ United Nations, *Department of Economic and Social Affairs* available at <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/index.shtml> accessed on 28.08.2017

occupations facing ... difficulties in recruitment or lack of qualifications".⁷ Focusing attention on highly qualified migrants is not only about importing human capital to reduce or eliminate gaps in the labor market, but also about stimulating innovation and supporting sustainable growth, reflecting the same belief that qualified migrants will adapt more easily to companies and local communities in the host country.

Moreover, as a benefit, migration can significantly contribute to the ability to adjust labor markets as recent estimates show that up to a quarter of the asymmetric labor market shock, which occurs at different times, and with different intensities in different countries, may have been absorbed by migration within one year.⁸

In terms of the social burden, a study in 2013 suggests that the impact of cumulated waves of migration over the last 50 years in European countries is on average near zero, rarely exceeding 0.5% of GDP either in positive or negative terms, except for Switzerland and Luxembourg, where immigrants provide an estimated net benefit of around 2% of GDP.⁹ Under these circumstances, because the tax impact, both in positive and negative terms, is quite small, we can say that immigrants do not represent any burden on the host country's fiscal system.

Another positive argument is that remittances by international migrants play an important role in developing countries of origin, being more important than official development assistance. But, despite this, home countries have difficulties in translating remittance revenue into sustainable development and in contrast they may increase inequality, encourage consumption of imports, and create dependency. The macro economic effects of remittances are not that great since the receiver cannot overcome structural problems such as: corruption, poor economic climate or even bad governance.¹⁰

If money sent to the country of origin is the major advantage, the loss of human resources, especially of highly qualified people, represents a fairly high cost. This situation is better represented by de Haas when trying to connect the migration phenomenon with the path of reaching a certain level of development or welfare. In his analysis, we have a macro-level (represented by its main currents and paths of migration), the meso level (equivalent to a broad range of regional or local traits), and the individual level (specific to migrants' socio-economic environment).¹¹

When addressing the sources of migration we should see this phenomenon within the framework of a circular mobility, involving all three main actors that influence this process: the country of origin, the transit routes (either we are talking about countries or even regions) and the destination countries.

⁷ European Commission – Speech, State of the Union 2015: Time for Honesty, Unity and Solidarity available at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-15-5614_en.htm accessed on 28.08.2017

⁸ J. Jauer, T. Liebig, P. Martin and P. Puhani "Migration as an Adjustment Mechanism in the Crisis? A Comparison of Europe and the United States", OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 155, OECD Publishing, Paris, (2014), available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jzb8p51gvhl-en> accessed on 28.08.2017

⁹ T. Liebig and J. Mo "The Fiscal Impact of Immigration in OECD Countries", International Migration Outlook 2013, OECD Publishing, Paris, (2013), available at http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/migr_outlook-2013-6-en accessed on 28.08.2017

¹⁰ S. Newell, *The Modernity Bluff: Crime, Consumption, and Citizenship in Cote D'Ivoire*, (Chicago :University Press, Chicago, 2012), 27-29.

¹¹ H. De Haas, "The Internal dynamics of migrations processes. A theoretical inquiry", *Journal of Ethic and Migration Studies*, 2010, 4.

SOCIETAL SECURITY

As I said above, migration has a demographic impact, both for countries of origin and for host countries, not only by increasing the size of the population, but also by changing the age pyramid of the population in the host countries. This change in the size of a population can bring about a change in the social life of people, which can still cause a change in various other aspects of human life, such as economic, cultural and political. This is the point where we have to take into account the social security that refers to the "ability of society to preserve its essential characteristics in the face of varying circumstances and despite the potential or real threats".¹² Social security is compromised when a community perceives a threat to its identity, identity being defined as a set of ideas and practices that identify certain individuals as members of a social group.¹³

William Bloom proposes an identity theory stating that "in order to achieve psychological security, each individual possesses an inwardness of internalization, identifying with the behavior, habits and attitudes of significant figures in his social environment, that is, people are actively seeking to consolidate and protect identity".¹⁴

Barry Buzan is another author who also describes the security of society as an identity concept: "Social security concerns, traditional language patterns, culture, religious and national identities, and habits must be maintained at a satisfactory level development".¹⁵ Extending the interest of national security in the field of social security results from the role of the contemporary democratic state, whose duty is to take care of its citizens, regardless of their material status, in order to allow them to take part in social life.

Because the security of society is based on identity, as Buzan Barry, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wil argue that "the social sector represents identity," and "society is about identity ..." it follows that "the concept of social security can be understood as "identity security".¹⁶ They are also those who propose three categories of threats to social security. The first threat identified is migration, saying that this is a situation where "X people are overcome or diluted by influxes of Y people;" X community will no longer be what it was because others will make up the population X Identity X will be reflected by a change in the composition of the population of the social group.¹⁷ For example, the latest data reveals a new trend under the pressure of the migration crisis in the EU; groups in some countries perceive migration as a threat and politicians change their speech in antagonistic directions, leading to increased tensions between Member States. There is a clear possibility of characterizing immigrants as a threat; often this characterization is communicated by political leaders justifying emergency measures as well as certain immediate changes, either internal changes or adherence to international rules and norms.

Migration, in this context, constitutes a threat to a society when 'alien' identities pose a threat or are perceived as threatening to the existing society's identity. Reports on the perception of European citizens about the migrant crisis reveal the fact that in Romania the arrival of the first fifteen people radically affected the public opinion and the media, and in

¹² Peter Hough, „*Understanding Global Security*” (New York: Routledge, 2004), 106.

¹³ Branka Panić, “*Societal security – security and identity*”, Carl Schmitt and Copenhagen School of Security Studies, No 13, April–June 2009.

¹⁴ William Bloom, “*Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations*” (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 16.

¹⁵ Barry Buzan, “*People, States, and Fear, 2nd ed.: An Agenda for International Security in the Post-Cold War Era*”, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1991), 19.

¹⁶ Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, Jaap de Wilde, “*Security: a New Framework for Analysis*”, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 119.

¹⁷ Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, Jaap de Wilde, *Security: a New Framework for Analysis*, 121.

the host city, Galati, a protest took place, indicating a not quite good opinion about the existence of these migrants on Romania's territory. According to existing studies, the perception of the economic dimension of migration, such as the perception of labor market competition and the expectation of economic contributions at different levels, could affect ethnic hostility.

As for the speech on migration, besides the importance of ethnic balance in society, the concept of "social cohesion" has also become important due to concerns about social divisions, especially at the local level.

Migrants are qualified in several categories in the destination countries they adopt, and these categories are essential to politicizing the issue of migration. A common category is economic, family and humanitarian migration, which reflects three different motivations that often overlap within an individual. This label of economic motivation draws attention to a threat that migrants can pose to the local economy: migrants either threaten jobs or become a burden on the social system of the target country. And all migrants, such as humanity, are often viewed as an economic burden for the host state, without providing clear benefits.¹⁸

Securitization of the migration problem is achieved by using multiple and overlapping speeches, with migrants being presented as a threat on three different axes, namely: a cultural / identity axis, on an economic axis mentioned above (the loss of work being at the same time a burden on the social system) and a security axis defined by terrorism and crime.

The media have an important role in society's awareness and in maintaining the dominant constructs of the self and the other, so they play an instrumental role in securitization by putting the emphasis on "us" and "them" by explaining what constitutes a particular conflict and what can be done to stop it.¹⁹ The media may sometimes sabotage securitization attempts by filming and opposing cadres, either owned or borrowed from disheartening actors, but in most cases it only serves as a forum whereby securitization actors communicate their own framework.

Because the media rarely generate its own framework, it should be noted that the media often focuses on dramatic, sensational reporting. Selective use of frame elements can lead to a distorted picture of the problem at hand, which in part explains why security frameworks are prioritized. For these reasons, media coverage is essential to any understanding of the securitization of the migration issue.

Legal and illegal labor flows increased due to the collapse of economies in the process of reform and the growing level of unemployment and economic disparities.

We are enabling people to come to the UK and work legally, paying taxes and contributing, rather than allowing people to work in the shadow economy where they are often exploited. Many citizens of the new Member States already contribute significantly to the social and economic life of the UK. They will help to fill half a million job vacancies and we will benefit from this, whether they are plumbers, plasterers or pediatricians’.”²⁰

After the renunciation of the visa regime for Romanian in 2002, the UK and Spain's economy was expanding and looking for workforce making them as country of destination for international migration. The evolution of Romanian migration to Spain shows a continuous growth until 2006 (211.325 Romanian migrants), and a great explosion after that, due to Schengen arrangements, reaching more than 800.000 migrants in 2016. Several studies also show that Romanian “migrants preferred locations where the native population was

¹⁸ S. D. Watson, *“The Securitization of Humanitarian Migration: Digging Moats and Sinking Boats”*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 21.

¹⁹ S. D. Watson, *“The Securitization of Humanitarian Migration: Digging Moats and Sinking Boats”* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 22.

²⁰ David Blunkett, Home Secretary, 25 March 2004.

perceived as more understanding, allowing foreign workers to „live in normal conditions”.²¹ In 1999 50% of the Spanish population was in favor of Romania’s accession to the EU, while in contrast, only 26% of the French population. Moreover, in Spain 40% believed that immigration would be limited and there were no negative effects expected. Also, as the economic growth of Spain has experienced in the beginning of the years of 2000 demanded for workers in different sectors of the labor market, Spain and Romania signed a bilateral labor recruitment treaty in 2002.²²

Bilateral labor recruitments are an important mechanism for inter-state cooperation in order to protect migrant workers, to match labor demand and supply, to manage irregular migration and to regulate recruitment.

The directive on improving the enforcement of workers' rights was adopted. This requires Member States to ensure that one or more bodies at national level will provide support and legal assistance to EU migrant workers with the enforcement of their rights, effective legal protection of rights and easily accessible information in more than one EU language on the rights enjoyed by EU migrant workers and jobseekers.²³

In terms of social security those who were authorized to work in the UK could claim housing benefit to help pay their rent while working, and also may have access to tax credits and child benefit. Romanian national workers who became unemployed only acquired the same rights to non-contributory benefits, such as income -based Jobseeker’s Allowance, as other nationals if they have been continuously employed in accordance with the Home Office Worker Authorization Scheme for 12 months or more.

Nevertheless, following an article by the Prime Minister’s in the Financial Times on 27 November 2013 in which he said he shared concerns about the impact of lifting transitional restrictions on the right of Romanian and Bulgarian to work in the UK from 1 January 2014, the Government has introduced a raft of measures to further restrict social security. They refer to: starting from 1 January 2014, people coming to the UK must have been living in the UK for three months before they can claim income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance, jobseekers or former workers will have to show that they have a “genuine prospect of finding work” to continue to get Jobseeker’s Allowance after six months, starting from 1 March 2014, a new minimum earnings threshold to help determine whether an European national is or was in “genuine and effective” work, and so has a “right to reside” as a worker or self-employed person.

CONCLUSION

It is time to understand and accept that the mobility of professionals is part of our lives in the context of the 21st century globalization. There is no doubt that migration, in particular the migration of skilled labor, favors the development of beneficiary countries. There is also sufficient evidence to show that labor migration affects both countries of origin,

²¹ Liliana Hiris, “*The Social Context of European East-West Migration*” In Silasi, Grigore and Simina, Ovidiu Laurian “*Migration, Mobility and Human Rights at the Eastern Border of the European Union- Space of Freedom and Security*”, (Editura Universitatii de Vest, Timisoara, 2008), 28-34.

²² In these agreements regulating labour migration flows, the Spanish authorities, through Spanish Embassies in origin countries, notify the origin countries’ authorities of the number and type of workers needed, taking into account existing job offers. (There is no set quota; rather, the employers in Spain request a certain number of needed workers.) Origin countries in turn notify the Spanish authorities, through the Spanish Embassies, of the possibility of meeting this demand with their nationals willing to go to Spain. Available at <http://www.unhcr.org/50aa5cfc9.pdf> and http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/--protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_385582.pdf accessed on 12.09.2017

²³<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2059&furtherNews=yes> accessed on 12.09.2017

both negatively and positively. The significant economic dimensions of migration, combined with the aging population in Europe, turn immigration into a priority research issue.

Since migration has become in the last few years a very pressing topic on the international agenda, efforts should be directed to support institutions in host countries, as well as transition ones, to manage the migratory flows. But since the root cause for massive immigration is located in the state of origin, this one should be the first to benefit from the support of international community. Labor forces migration is much easier to control and predict, while on the other side the migration caused by natural disasters or conflict driven migration is much more difficult to anticipate or contain.

Immigration can be viewed both as a major tax burden for European social systems or as a possible savior if it is properly exploited. The impact depends very much with regard to the age of the migrants, education and length of stay. On average, immigrants seem to have a positive net positive effect for host countries. Of course, these benefits are not uniformly distributed on the native population and on all sectors of the economy.

Both the academic community, as well as world decision making structures, acknowledge the fact that there won't be a durable solution to tackle the migration problem unless standards of living are made a top priority on the global agenda setting. Elevating the standards of living especially in poor and vulnerable areas makes things far less complicated on the long run for all of us. In order to stem development, the sources of funding are necessary; but why not using a mix of investment instruments that follow mainly a private logic of performance and not the public sector recipe. In such a way, the general standard of living will be lifted determining individuals to remain closer to their home territories and countries, thus contributing to the global peace and stability.

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