

ASPECTS OF THE MIGRATION IMPACT ON SECURITY DIMENSIONS

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ABSTRACT

MIGRATION GATHERS AROUND A BROAD SET OF SOCIAL PHENOMENA AND BETWEEN MIGRATION AND SECURITY THERE ARE INTER CAUSAL RELATIONSHIPS. MIGRATION CAN BE SEEN BOTH AS CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE OF THE SECURITY PROBLEMS.

MIGRATION CAN APPEAR AS THE RESULT OF DIFFERENT THREATS TO THE SECURITY OF THE HUMAN RACE SUCH AS HUMAN RIGHTS' VIOLATIONS, INTERETHNIC CONFLICTS, CIVIL WAR, ETC. WHEN IT'S UNCONTROLLED, MIGRATION ITSELF CAN REPRESENT A SOURCE OF RISKS, DANGERS AND THREATS, HAVING AS A RESULT THE INCREASE OF ORGANIZED CRIME, XENOPHOBIA AND RACIAL VIOLENCE, ETC. IN THE SAME TIME, MIGRATION HAS IMPACT OVER ALL THE SECURITY STATE' DIMENSIONS: POLITICS, ECONOMICS, SOCIAL, MILITARY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES.

KEY WORDS: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, SECURITY, MIGRATION, REFUGEES, ASYLUM SEEKERS.

INTRODUCTION

Population exodus is a permanent reality in the human history. How does migration flows influence security? The states represent the main security pillar, which means that, in order to understand how the migration flow affects the regional and international security, we need to analyze the way this flows affects the host states and the states of destination.

Migration represents “the voluntary movement of individuals, populations, from one country to another or from one region to another, due to economic, social, political, cultural or natural factors”³.

The twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century faced a continuous population exodus⁴:

- between 1871-1915 Europeans exodus towards other continents, especially America;

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³ Marcel D. Popa et. al, *Encyclopedic dictionary* (București: Enciclopedica, 1993-2009)

⁴ Valentin Baluțoiu, Lucia Copoeru, Aurel Constantin Soare, Ecaterina Stănescu, Constantin Vitanos, *The history of the twentieth century and education for democratic citizenship*, (București, Educația 2000+, 2006), 15, 19.

- between 1918-1920 movements provoked by the border drawing as a result of the unraveling of the Russian, Austro Hungarian, Turkish and German empires and the establishment of the national states;
- between 1922-1933 the migration of the opponents of the extremist regimes, as well as those individuals targeted by the dictatorial regimes: Italian and German antifascists, and Jewish;
- in 1940 the Romanians refugees from the territories seized by Russia, Hungary, and Bulgaria;
- between 1939-1945 the removal of several communities living in the war areas-during the war time;
- between 1960-1970 inhabitants of the former colonies migrate towards their host countries;
- between 1991-1993 economic or political migration of the inhabitants of the ex-communist countries;
- refugees from the interethnic, religious and military conflict areas: 1991 from Croatia, 1992-1996 from Bosnia Herzegovina, 1998-1999 from Kosovo. Approximately 4.6 million people moved either to the neighboring countries or to other European countries where they acquired the refugee status.

Currently, the international migration takes place in multiple forms: “minorities’ migration towards the host countries, labor force migration, family migration (previous workers migrant families’ migration), and migration forced by natural disasters, politic or religious persecutions, wars, etc”⁵.

MIGRATION IMPACT ON SECURITY DIMENSIONS

Migration has impact on security in all its dimensions, political, economic, social and psychosocial, military, and environmental.

The political dimension of security is influenced and influences - positively or negatively-international migration through the ideologies and policies pursued by governments and rulers. There are two specific terms: refugees and asylum seekers who generated including a political status for the people who migrate.

Refugees are people who leave their country of origin because of persecution or fear that they will be persecuted on grounds of race, religion, nationality, or membership of a particular social group or political⁶. Refugee status is granted on request, proving that in the alien's country of origin he/she has justified fears of being persecuted for reasons of race, nationality, religion, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion⁷.

Asylum seekers are people who have left their home country, have applied for recognition as refugees in another country and expect a decision in this regard. Political asylum - a status that a foreign citizen can receive in case that in his country he/she risks a discriminatory or even an inhuman treatment due to their political beliefs⁸.

The countries of origin for refugees and asylum seekers are those with oppressive political regimes or with social and economic problems that affect the security of individuals. According to UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), in the entire

⁵ Alexandra Sarcinschi, *Migration and security*, (București: National Defense University, 2008), 9.

⁶ According to *UN convention regarding the refugees’ status* (1951) and *The Protocol regarding the refugees’ status* (1967) apud. Alexandra Sarcinschi, *Migration and security*, 10.

⁷ *Law no. 15 from 2 April 1996, regarding the refugees’ status and arrangements in Romania* art.1.

⁸ <http://legeaz.net/dictionar-juridic/azil-politic> accessed on 24.04.2014

world, there are approximately 10.5 million refugees and half of them are children⁹. The High United Nations Commissioner for Refugees estimates that “in 2013, more than 2 million people had to refugee, far from their home. In this way, an alarming record that has not been touched for almost 20 years was reached”¹⁰.

An asylum seeker is a person who says is a refugee and is seeking international protection because of persecution or serious hazards in his own country. Each refugee is initially an asylum seeker, but not every asylum seeker will be recognized, eventually, as a refugee. While waiting for their applications to be accepted or rejected, these people are called asylum seekers.

A UNHCR report shows a sharp increase in asylum applications during 2013, mainly driven by the Syrian crisis in the industrialized countries (fig.no.1)¹¹.

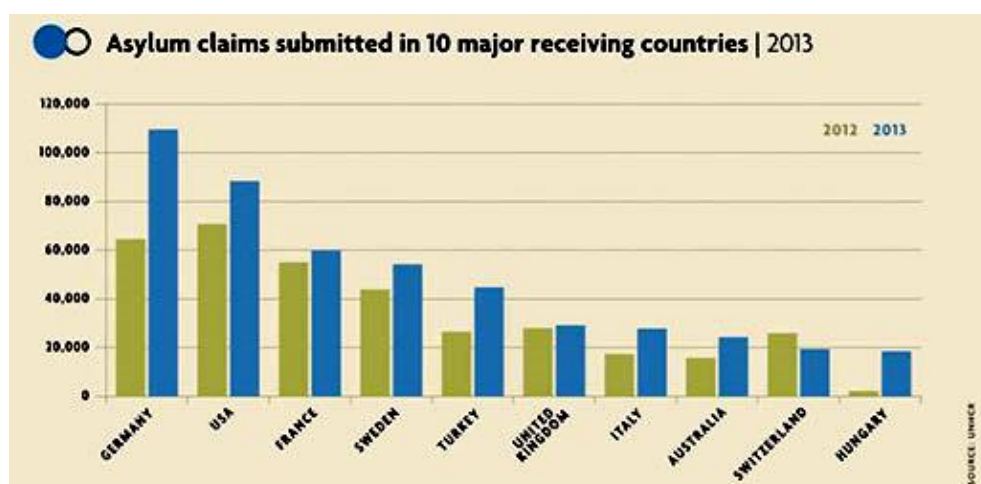


Fig. no. 1 Number of asylum applications in the main 10 destination countries. Source UNHCR

The "Asylum Trends 2013" report states that 612.700 people sought asylum in 2013 in North America, Europe, East Asia and Pacific - representing a record number of figures evidenced for this type of request since 2001 to current date¹².

In Romania, the number of people who submitted asylum requests in 2013 was 1.499 (mostly from Syria) representing 60% of all applications registered in 2012 (2.511).

Analyzing the phenomenon of migration in the context of the political dimension of security, we can identify a bivalent dimension of the interaction between the political conflict and the refugees. This is because the political conflicts can represent both the cause and the effect in relation with the refugees.

On one side, by recognizing the refugee status for individuals, the destination country admits that the origin country has a political regime that allows persecution and oppression, having as a result, tensions between the two actors. On the other side, in the destination

⁹ <http://www.unhcr-centraleurope.org/ro/stiri/2014/compania-ikea-i-unhcr-aduc-lumina-in>, accessed on 24.04.2014

¹⁰ António Guterres, *The High United Nations Commissioner for Refugees*, according to <http://www.unhcr-centraleurope.org/ro/stiri/2014/compania-ikea-i-unhcr-aduc-lumina-in-taberele-de-refugiai.html> accessed on 24.04.2014.

¹¹ UNHCR *Asylum Trends 2013*, available at <http://www.unhcr.org/5329b15a9.html>, accessed on 05.05.2014.

¹² Report released by the Office of The High United Nations Commissioner for Refugees, on 21 March, Geneva, available at <http://www.unhcr-centraleurope.org/ro/stiri/2014/raport-unhcr-a-crescut-numarul-cererilor-de-azil-in-tarile-industrializate.html> accessed on 05.05.2014.

countries, the refugees can cause problems by joining opposition movements against the government of the origin countries or even transnational terrorist networks.

There is another category of people, those who for reasons similar to refugees (armed conflict, generalized violence, violations of human rights), moves internally, without passing an international border, to find shelter and remain in their countries of origin.

UNHCR and UNICEF estimates illustrate that more than 2 million children have been internally displaced across Syria. Uprooting, fear, stress and trauma experienced by a great number of children forms only a small part of the humanitarian crisis. Both agencies reported other dangers to children refugees, such as the use of child labor, the possibility of sexual exploitation and human trafficking¹³.

Political threats undermine the stability of the state, the organizational ideologies and the institutions that represent the state. From the political point of view, the state can be threatened from the inside or from outside. From the inside, the state may be threatened by the actions of groups who feel disadvantaged by government policy. From the outside, the state may be threatened by the ideology of another state, nationalism, chauvinism, fundamentalism, liberal democracy or communism. In this respect, when between the origin and the destination country of the immigrants there are ideological differences, which can be accompanied or not by geopolitical rivalry, the immigrants can be used by the host state against the country of origin. Reverse situation is also possible, for example when immigrants have a different ideology than the host country, they can represent a threat to that state (if they are involved in anti-regime activities in the host country).

An external political threat can relatively easy become an internal one. In response to the actions of immigrants against the political regime of the country of origin, the latter can track the activities of immigrants in the country of residence. The authorities in the country of origin of immigrants can seek to attract diaspora elements to cooperate in support of their policies. This equals with the internationalization of the conflict, meaning that a conflict between political groups belonging to the same state that would normally be performed in that state, is taken in another state (as it happened between the Iranian state and the terrorist group called "People's Mujahedin", whose members, residents in Iraq, were used by the Iraqi government against Iran).

From the economic perspective, migration issues mainly refer to the exodus of qualified and overqualified occupational categories with direct repercussions over the performance of some economic sectors and ministries essential to the functioning of the state. Here also, we talk about a double impact of migration both in the origin and the destination country:

- in the origin country:
 - negative impacts: over the country development, such as "drain brain" (highly qualified occupational categories' migration- see the Romanian doctors' situation) and the lack of labor force in certain sectors belonging to the national economy, which leads to the decreasing of the productivity and incomes, but also a decrease of the life quality;
 - positive impacts: over the same economy, capital flows entering the country increasing to a certain extent the gross domestic product, but also increasing the living standards of migrant families and communities to which they belong.
- in the destination country:
 - negative impacts: immigrants are seen as an economic burden on the housing sector and the social security system, creating economic problems for the country as well as for its communities and citizens;

¹³UNHCR/UNICEF, available at http://www.rador.ro/doc/661/2013-08/news-347805-comunicat_presa_unhcr_unicef_1mill_sirian_children.pdf, accessed on 23.04.2014.

-positive impacts: immigrants are welcomed as being cheaper and, in some cases, highly qualified labor. In this context there are economic benefits for the country (increasing labor productivity and gross domestic product).

Economical threats relate to the pressures that migration induces over the general development plans of the countries of destination.

The most important component of the economical threats targets the financial constraints that migration is inducing on the governments of the receiving states. In the destination countries of international migration, immigrants often induce significant pressures on the health system or the transport facilities, boosting consumption¹⁴.

In order to cope with this additional consumption, host states can increase the taxes on their citizens. Such measures may attract negative sentiments from the natives, towards the presence of immigrants. Further on, the hostility can undermine the socio-political cohesion of the state, affecting its security.

Regarding the social dimension, migration can be seen throughout the fact that immigrants are perceived as a threat to cultural, religious or national identity of the society.

Research¹⁵ revealed that 76 % of Europeans consider that a large number of immigrants arriving in their country constitute an important or very important threat to their states. This perception is rooted in the increased pressure on social services, such as cheaper housing demand and the need for good schools in areas with pronounced ethnic diversity. These concerns stem from feelings of uncertainty and anxiety about the future, spread across Europe and, although erroneously, are associated among others with migration. This is highlighted by the fact that following some surveys in the United Kingdom, "47% of those who responded to the survey said that Romanians and Bulgarians should not get the right to come to Britain to work and to establish here"¹⁶.

In the long term, the most obvious effect of migration is the creation of the ethnic minorities that can turn a homogeneous society into a multiethnic and multicultural one. Migration is an important challenge to the traditional values of nationality and citizenship. Immigrants could constitute a threat to the social, cultural and religious norms and values of the host society. In their attempt to defend these values, the host societies may be tempted to emphasize the differences between the dominant culture and the minority cultures existing within the host society.

For the citizens of the country of origin, the immigrants began to represent not only a source of income but also a vulnerability in the technological competition between states; the developed countries increasingly attract more highly qualified workforce from the countries which cannot provide the same high standards of living.

The relationship between international migration and psychosocial dimension of security can be reduced to a single phrase: psychosocial representation of the other (meaning different). These representations determine attitudes, which, in turn, not only configures state policies and strategies vis-à-vis migration but also the events that trigger tensions, crises and conflicts, affecting all security' dimensions and, therefore, all areas of social life.

¹⁴ Martin O. Heisler, Layton-Henry Zig, *Migration and the Links Between Social and Societal Security*, in Ole Weaver, Barry Buzan, Morten Kelstrup; Pierre Lemaitre (eds.), *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1993

¹⁵ Marcel Canoy, Ricklef Beutin, Anna Horvath, Agnes Hubert, Frederic Lerais, Peter Smith, Myriam Sochacki, *Migration and public perception*, Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA) European Commission, available at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/policy_advisers/publications/docs/bepa_migration_final_09_10_006_en.pdf, accessed on 24.04.2014

¹⁶ Daily Mail, *Romanian immigrants split UK in two-survey*, 25 November 2013, available at <http://www.ziare.com/diaspora/romani-marea-britanie/imigrantii-romani-impart-marea-britanie-in-doua-sondaj-1269744>, accessed on 24.04.2014.

Another issue concerning the interconnection migration-security is related to the public health of the natives. A 2006 report from the Health Protection Agency in the UK shows that most immigrants are young healthy individuals, but they are more vulnerable in relation to the European natives in terms of infectious diseases; about 70% of new cases of tuberculosis, HIV and malaria were recorded in patients born in Britain. Many immigrants develop the infection as a consequence of their socio-economic status in the host countries¹⁷. Regarding the military dimension of security, we can say that immigrants can affect a state military security in several ways.

A first method consists in the possibility to use the territory of the host state to initiate military activities against the state of origin (mainly for political reasons). Such a scenario may generate tensions and even conflicts between the home state and the destination state of immigrants, regardless of whether the last offered or not support to immigrants in the preparation and organization of those activities.

Another way in which immigrants can threaten the military security of a state is related to the possibility of refugees (and immigrants) to "persuade" the State that give them shelter to take direct action against their country of origin, with the stated goal of changing the politic regime in that country. A third way in which immigrants can affect the security of the state or may be perceived as so, is related to be host state's interest to provoke the political regime of the country of origin of the immigrants.

The environmental dimension of security impacts and, in the same time is influenced by the international migration. On one hand, forced migration may be the result of massive degradation of the living environment; the degradation can be caused by natural disasters (desertification, floods, earthquakes, etc.) or by the humans. On the other hand, massive flows of immigrants and especially refugees can cause damage to the environment by the built of camps lacking the necessary health infrastructure.

In the first case, the internal migration is predominant and not the international one, in 2007 over 25 million people were forced to leave their homes due to a natural disaster (earthquake, hurricane or flood)¹⁸.

In the second case, the refugees are those who cause damage to the environment. Klaus Toepfer, the coordinator of the Report of the United Nations Environment Programme in 2005, said that environmental resources are affected by the presence of refugees by deforestation, soil erosion, destruction of wildlife, biodiversity depletion, water contamination, excessive cultivation of the land, etc¹⁹. For example, Rwandan refugees caused, in 1994 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the loss of over 3,750 hectares of forest²⁰ and, in Tanzania - soil erosion in areas where their cattle were grazing in excess²¹.

Millions of other civilians may be classified as internally displaced people who were left homeless by natural disasters: the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004; Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar in 2008, the floods in Pakistan in 2010 etc.

¹⁷ Antonio Ponticciello, Miriam C. Sturkenboom, Andreea Simonetti, Rosanna Ortolani, Mário Malerba, Alessandro Sanduzzi, *Deprivation, immigration and tuberculosis incidence in Naples, 1996-2000*, in European Journal of Epidemiology, vol. 20, 2005, 729-734.

¹⁸ Baird, Rachel (coord.), *Human Tide: the Real Migration Crisis*, Christian Aid, 2007, 5.

¹⁹ Toepfer, Klaus, *The Impact of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons on Local Environmental Resources*, UNEP, December 2005, 1.

²⁰ Klaus, *The Impact of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons on Local Environmental Resources*, 2

²¹ Klaus, *The Impact of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons on Local Environmental Resources*, 3

CONCLUSIONS

All security dimensions are interrelated and, therefore, the impact of international migration on them, and their influence on the above mentioned phenomena cannot be analyzed separately, but in conjunction.

Migration is at the same time a source of insecurity and a source of security for both countries of origin and their citizens and the countries of destination and their inhabitants.

The states that are vulnerable due to some related situations such as underperforming economy, weak social cohesion, dysfunctional/ ineffective public institutions, or immature political system are more exposed to security risks related to migration than the strong ones, economically and politically well-organized.

Security challenges are rooted especially in the ethnic and religious differences between the population of the destination country and immigrant population, but also in the low living standards of the latter, caused by difficult access to jobs in the country. In the same time, the unfavorable image that nationals have about the new arrivals, those who "invade" and "are threatening" the communities, is often a source of tension between them. We subscribe to the statement „lastly, contrary to the widespread public opinion that immigration is a threat to public security, there is little to no correlation between immigration and criminality. The act of labeling immigration as a security threat does more to harm society than it does to protect it. It often results in xenophobic and racist attitudes, the exclusion of immigrant groups, and the perception of the immigrant as the undeserving other or enemy”²². However, we should not underestimate the role of immigrants as security factors, especially in the economic field. There are several European countries, which following legal or illegal employment of foreigners in various sectors of the economy registered a substantial increase in gross domestic product and, therefore, a significant increase in the living standards of their citizens.

²²Julia Tallmeister, *Is Immigration a Threat to Security?* Available at <http://www.e-ir.info/2013/08/24/is-immigration-a-threat-to-security/> accessed on 19.05.2014

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5. **Sarcinschi, Alexandra;** *Migration and security*, București: UNAp "Carol I", 2008.