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Migrations: the Politics Lined with Fear?

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MIGRATIONS VERSUS INTERNAL SECURITY

Over last decade the statement claiming that state borders and their protection have become the second priority issues as compared to globalization and growing economic integration has been considered intellectually trendy. Prophets of globalization and advocates of the free market have promoted optimistically that such term as State territory has become *passé* and they advanced the idea of states with no borders blocking the flow of services, goods and people. So it went until September 11, 2001. In the world after 9/11, protection of the State territory has gained new quality in the political discourses, and, in Europe, it hit the ground with double impact following March 11, 2004 and July 2, 2005. In this context, the phenomenon of international migrations has started to be perceived as one of the real hazards for the internal security¹.

International migrations have been incorporated into political discourses for years now, in the context of various threats. This is a fruitful area to capitalize old prejudices, traumas of the past, stereotypes or simply - myths. Over the last two decades, continuously increasing influx of immigrants to the EU member states made low-cost, off-shore labor to be also considered as a destabilizing agent of social security. However, this was the destabilizing agent analyzed and associated mostly with the situation on labor markets, i.e. unemployment rate, segmentation of labor markets, access to social benefits, competitiveness on labor markets, etc. Soon after the immigrants had reached as much as five up to ten percent of the total population of the EU member states – as it happened at the end of the 1990's – the migrants were no longer recognized as the factor enriching the culture of the host society and the menace for national identity and culture was added to the economic threats.

¹ Andreas, P.,2002, The Re-Bordering of America After 11 September, *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Winter 2002,vol. 8, issue 2.

In the world after 9/11 international migrations have ceased to be barely a topic to be discussed in the demographic and social debates hoping to find equilibrium between, on one hand, the economic growth and cultural integration, and well-being and satisfaction of the electorate on the other. These days, the internal security-immigration interdependence seems to have become increasingly vital and, as it has been mentioned so far, its quality has changed as well. The relation between migrations and internal security is one of these aspects of the political discourse that, in my opinion, is able to affect national migration policies as well as the migration policy of the European Union in the nearest future.

Recently, various means and mechanisms of border and inflow control have been significantly enforced. The migration policy is an area, where complying with the international and national laws may well coexist with fighting international terrorism and transnational organized crime.

Enforced border control, enforced entry control, more restrictive visa policy, applying cutting-edge solutions for recognition of identity, collecting and regional exchange of personal data (in the European context it is the Schengen Information System – SIS, Eurodac and Europol) concerning, among other things, these individuals who have breached the law: these are unfortunately the means that seem indispensable in the modern world. However, they mostly concentrate on the control over flow of people and, therefore, may be insufficient in fighting both terrorism and growing extreme forces as well as the organized crime. The challenge for the internal security is to take into account above-mentioned means and mechanisms of border control and flow of people from a wider social and economic perspective referring to majority-minority relations.

In this context, governments of some European states, being aware that the immigrant societies, which are culturally and economically integrated with the host society and do not constitute a potential source of infiltration for extreme movements and recruitment for criminal environments, conduct special programs aimed at the fight against xenophobia and discrimination.

HOMEBOY OR STRANGER?

Undoubtedly, escalation of xenophobic attitudes is connected with considerable intensification of immigration phenomena on one hand, and lack of integration programs, experience and social debates on various consequences of immigration, both positive and negative, on the other. Xenophobia may range from racist attacks on foreigners, yet it may also be reflected in, for example, anti-EU or, generally, anti-Western slogans of the political parties. Immigration or immigrants are often the axis of these debates and political campaigns where old prejudices, trauma of the past, stereotypes or simply - myths politically used.

Such a situation may take place in most of the new member states of the European Union, including Poland. Especially that over the last 50 years Polish society has been the ethnically homogenous, thus it has had no opportunity to live and learn to cope with other cultures on day-to-day basis. After 1989 the mechanisms of migrants' flow in the CEE region changed. The influx of refugees and individuals in search for economic space and place to live, both from neighboring states as well as far-away lands, has influenced diversification of the population and slow building of ethnic and cultural mosaic in Poland. Groups of foreigners considered new and exotic for this part of Europe, such as Chinese in Hungary, or Vietnamese in Poland were formed at a quick pace.

According to the sociologists there are three factors prompting opinion-making on foreigners in Poland. The first factor is related to the belief of the Poles that the newcomers are from underdeveloped areas and that they personify deep cultural differences. This belief concerns mainly the migrants from Eastern Europe and Balkans, and it constitutes a base for quite a powerful negative attitude towards nationalities of these origins. The second factor, economic and political achievements of the given region, stand behind a considerably positive attitude towards representatives of Western Europe and the U.S. The third factor is linked to our aspirations for the European integration and the collaboration within Central Europe. On these grounds such nationalities as Czechs, Slovaks or Hungarians can be found right in the middle on the scale of Polish attitude, which goes from the least favorable (Eastern Europe) to the most favorable (Western Europe).

HISTORY, STATE AND IMMIGRANTS

So far, inexperienced Polish migration policy have been focused on creating of migration regulations aimed at entrance and stay as well as forming of executive bodies dealing with these elementary restrictions.

The authorities are not much interested in the composite image of social and economical interdependence referring to migrations of foreigners to Poland, what is manifested by the weakness of the Polish integration system as well as extremely limited reflections on phenomena and processes related to the possible future participation of immigrants in the social life and majority-minority relations. In the context of above-mentioned considerations on the links between the internal security and social and economic aspects of immigrants' integration, this issue may be recognized as a significant challenge for the authorities as well as the society in the nearest future.

Weakness of the integration element in Polish migration policy, excluding inexperienced politicians, may also have an excuse though no justification in the future. From the historical perspective in the most of Central European states including, among other things, Germany and Austria, the key criterion determining affiliation to the nation state was membership in a particular ethnic or cultural group. In Central European countries, that over the centuries were existing on the edge of various cultures and religions and were exposed to plunders, invasions and partitions, and were actively participating in rises and falls of empires, partitions, losses and regains of sovereignty, unifications and divisions, one of the political goals, not expressed verbally, was and still is the maintenance of cultural homogeneity². Acceptance of cultural diversity is perceived mainly as a threat to national identity. Although in the times of globalization of labor markets and international mass migrations such a goal seems to be a utopia, subconscious or conscious membership in the civic society as an employee, taxpayer, parent, etc. is not considered as simultaneous and automatic membership in the nation state. This differentiates this part of the world from e.g. Sweden, Netherlands, the U.S., Canada or Australia.

² Castles, S., 1995, How nation-states respond to immigration and ethnic diversity, *New Community*, nr 21.

Therefore such states are mentally reluctant to perceive immigrants and their children as legal members of their society. This dislike is manifested, among other things, by restrictive immigration policy, *ius sanguinis*, and ideology that does not accept the fact that the country is becoming a receiving country. The delayed processes of nation states development in the CEE region can explain both majority-minority relations as well as strengthening of the most hostile forms of nationalism. The variations of this model are such countries as Switzerland or Belgium that have developed as nation states on the basis of more than one core ethnic group.

However, at present, in the democratic states, foreigners cannot be practically isolated from the host society. Their role depends on the migration policy of the receiving country and their relations with the society. The integration element of the migration policy varies in each state and depends mostly on tradition and history. Nevertheless, sooner or later each migration policy has to give answers to some key questions. In the field of immigration these questions are: how many immigrants can we host? Who should come? Where from? What kind of immigrants do we need (for example – age, sex, education, qualifications, ethnic origin)? Under what conditions should the foreigners come? What status should they be given? In the field of integration the core questions the migration policy should give answer to, taking into account internal security, are as follows: what type of relations should be maintained between ethnic groups that may come and the local society? Should we make a pluralistic model of the society promoting multiculturalism or would assimilation or integration models do? How to prevent ethnic tension that is likely to happen?³

Examples of most of the European Union states as well as traditional immigration states such as the U.S., Canada or Australia prove that the character of the ethnic group is to a great extent determined by the attitude of the host society towards the incomers in the very first period of immigration. The migration policy supporting, or not interfering with, the undocumented stay or irregular work encourages growth of migration shadow economy and leads to social marginalization and exclusion of

³ Heckmann, F., i W. Bosswick (red), 1995, Migration Policies: a Comparative Perspective, Enke, Stuttgart.

immigrants, and, in effect, increase of xenophobic and racist attitudes in the host society towards the foreigners.

The policy that endeavors to uphold divisions between foreigners and citizens of the host society preventing the first group from participation in the various activities of the social life leads to permanent divisions.

The assimilation policy (currently represented by France) requires all the immigrants, who would like to settle down in a particular state to accept the identity of the host society at a price of rejecting their ethnic identity. Theoretically, assimilation is focused on leveling cultural differences between the host society and immigrants in order to counteract social conflict of ethnic origin. In fact, in the states running the purposeful assimilation policy, an intensified activity of nationalist movements making use of anti-immigrants slogans can be observed. Such activity leads to various racially fueled conflicts.

The assimilation policy used to be applied in the United States at the beginning of the last century, in the period of mass immigration and urbanization. It was also a model applied after 1945 in such states as Great Britain, Canada or Australia. However, in most cases the assimilation policy was being gradually replaced by the integration policy, often considered a weaker form of assimilation. The state started recognizing the separate character of the ethnic group in such areas as, for example, culture whilst it still continued assimilation policy in education or social policies. It happened when the authorities realized the immigrants did not want to assimilate as individuals and, just the opposite, they proceed to establish their own social or cultural organizations, use their own language, live in ethnic communities and get jobs in selected occupations. In brief, it happened when it turned out that the ethnic origin is very often correlated to the social and economic status.

The integration policy is based on the assumption that cultural adaptation of the minority into the majority culture is a long-lasting process where group coherence and its relations with the external world play a crucial role. However, this approach provides for total absorption of the minority by the dominant culture.

DILLEMAS OF MULTICULTURALISM

Historical experience of most of immigrant states shows that the highest chances of success in social relations between “us” and “others” is provided by the state policy offering possibility of settlement and family reunification while simultaneously approving of cultural differences⁴. Such a policy based upon equal rights for everybody assumes promotion of the multicultural society with all its consequences – thus it provides for permanent changes of cultural identity of the host society. In this context, “pluralism” can be defined as acceptance of otherness of immigrant societies as ethnic groups in cultural dimension. This approach came about relatively recently, as a gradual evolution of the integration model – it requires an in-depth understanding of cultural and social processes linked to immigration. Pluralism assumes that immigrants should be given equal rights in all areas of social life without the expectation that they would give up their diversity. However, it is usually expected that members of ethnic groups adjust to core values of the host society.

Pluralism has two options. *‘Laissez-faire’*, an approach typical for the U.S., otherness is tolerated but it is not the role of the state to uphold ethnical diversity. Economic and social integration of immigrants is mostly handed to forces of the free market. Egalitarian character of American society is understood to provide chances and opportunity for everybody to go for *‘American dream’*. However, the state plays quite an essential role in incorporation of the immigrants into the social life offering the first generation of the immigrants various alternatives for gaining American citizenship and treating the children in accordance with *ius soli*. The aim of comprehensive schooling is not only teaching English but also promoting American values⁵.

However, today the U.S. represent a paradox of the democratic system that, on one hand, incorporates ethnic minorities into mainstream of the social life by naturalization and, on the other hand, it is still a system based on the deep class, racial and ethnic divisions. Three factors may give an explanation to this paradox: culture of violence, which originates from the frontier tradition, deep-rooted racism

⁴ Castles, S., 1995, How nation-states respond to immigration and ethnic diversity, *New Community*, nr 21.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

going back to the not remote slavery era, and the tradition of individualism, resulting in the limited interventional social policy⁶.

Explicit multicultural variant is the option characteristic for, e.g. Australia. Australia was reaching its model step-by-step through destruction and marginalization of the local societies, Eurocentric model excluding any option of absorption by the state of non-white ethnic groups and assimilation. Australia needed new inhabitants, so the state bolstered family reunification and naturalization. However, in the early period, cultural diversity was to be avoided at any cost, for the existing belief that the minority culture should be absorbed by the dominant Anglo-Australian culture. In 1960's it turned out that, just like in the case of many other states applying assimilation, that model failed to succeed also in Australia. Ethnic ghettos were rapidly created, segmentation of the labor markets occurred as well as the social and economic segmentation of the immigrants. Political parties realized how powerful the votes of increasingly growing ethnic minorities could be, thus their claims could not be ignored any more⁷.

Current Australian variant of multiculturalism appeared in the 1970's. It imposes changes in institutional structures of the state assuming state interventionism in the area of social policy, which should facilitate ethnic minorities their operations within various dimensions of the social life. This model accepts existence of special rights, institutions and social policies facilitating the participation in the social life. Governmental agencies assist immigrants in job-search, they organize language training, provide translation services, etc. and the representatives of ethnic minorities help the government as consultants in managing such activities.

Nevertheless, the events of 9/11 proved how relatively feeble the Australian idea of multiculturalism had been, once, roughly the day after, the fear and the feeling of threat brought about nationalistic slogans and caused the rise in popularity of movements promoting anti-immigrant slogans.

⁶ Steinberg, S., 1981, *The Ethnic Myth: Race, Ethnicity and Class in America*, Boston, Bacon Press.

⁷ Inglis, Ch., 2002, Transnationalism: An Australian Perspective, *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Winter 2002, vol. 8, issue 2.

Due to the volume of this analysis, in order to make a concise summary of differences between French and American models, or the Australian one, the most important fact is that the state accepts or not the diversity of the immigrant societies as ethnic groups, in the cultural dimension. The price of naturalization in a country as France is an indisputable, cultural adjustment to the host country. The pluralistic model recognizes ethnic otherness in the area of culture and is usually connected to the state interventionism in the field of social policy to facilitate immigrants coping with the host society.

QUESTIONS WE SHOULD TRY TO ADDRESS

The issues discussed here have been merely delineated. The phenomenon of immigration and the respective reaction of the state is a topic which could be analyzed in many papers, in political, demographic, economic, sociological and historical terms. The state's reaction to immigration depends to a great extent on historical experience related to the birth of the nation state. The key matter is the regulation of access to citizenship and to the rights and duties deriving from the fact of belonging to a community. Apart from the control of entry, i.e. admission of foreigners, facilitation of residence rights, and naturalization, in the context of internal security the crucial matter is also the ability to draw conclusions from the relations between the majority and ethnic minorities, to fight against xenophobia, and to counteract socio-economic marginalization and exclusion of migrants.

Economic and cultural integration of immigrants with the host society means lower intensity of ethnicity-driven tensions and a lower level of acceptance in the immigrant communities for the slogans referring to extremism and the activity of criminal groups. This component of the migration policy should finally be treated seriously by such countries as Poland – a front country and potentially threatened both by Islamic terrorism and the post-soviet organized crime, and at the same time deprived of financial and technical means to assure full security.

In the context of the newest geopolitical changes, i.e. deconstruction of the communist regime and EU Enlargement to the East, it could be expected that the

immigration influx to the new member states, which started in the recent decade, will gradually increase. A serious challenge to the highly-developed countries is the mass migration from the third world countries. Apart from the economic migration, the source of this mass migration from these countries lies in various conflicts and political persecutions on the spot. Such phenomena are especially present in the countries in the phase of anarchy and “general disintegration”.

A serious threat to the internal security of Poland in the context of human migration is the non-existence of a readmission agreement with Russia. Destabilization caused by war, terrorism, ecological disasters etc. can enhance the volume of migration from third countries through Russia. Poland, as the border EU country can face thus a very difficult problem for internal security.

The closest neighborhood of Poland is composed by the countries going through a difficult phase of their economic development and with significant migration potential. These countries will not become EU members for the next 20-25 years. This concerns especially Ukraine, which with its 50 million inhabitants, deep economic crisis, and language and historical ties with Poland is the largest “exporter” of immigrants to Poland. Polish statistics, for many years now, have been showing the increase of long-term and settlement migrations of Ukrainians to Poland. The most prominent in the official statistics are the applications for the temporary residence in Poland (up to 10 years), work permits, permanent residence permits and marriages with Polish citizen. According to the estimates, there are ca. 500.000 undocumented workers in Poland per year – majority from the ex-USSR, predominantly from Ukraine.

In the recent years, the idea of multiculturalism has been actively promoted by various for a, as the best solution for the peaceful coexistence of the ethnic mosaic within one state. However, such concepts as integration, assimilation or multiculturalism are used interchangeably in Poland. My objective was thus to bring some order to some concepts (very briefly, as I have already mentioned), and to show that even traditionally immigrant countries are determined in their approach to immigration by history and tradition, which can cause ethnic and racial tensions. From this perspective, the challenges facing the totally inexperienced Polish migration policy are enormous; especially that under this policy certain types of

migrants, especially refugees, have been already allowed to fall into the socio-economic margins, and that a significant shadow zone of migration has already formed.

What are thus economic, social and cultural perspectives of the new immigrant groups, which have begun to and will continue to form in Poland? Are they facing economic, social and cultural marginalization? What model of integration will be elaborated by the Polish state? What model will be affordable? Will the growing number of migrants cause the increase of xenophobic attitudes in Polish society, which is not used to live side by side with foreign cultures, and which can feel threatened demographically, economically, or culturally? What will be the answer of the political parties to the possible social unrest? What will be the development of the internal security in this context?

In the era of the growing concerns about national security, Western democracies more often face the dilemma of finding the balance between the rules of the market and human rights on one hand, and political and security pressures on the other. Globalization of commerce and of labor markets and the decreasing demographic concur potential of Europe requires opening of the borders, what is difficult to reconcile with the new border controls. The slogan fashioned in the times of the French Revolution, claiming that “everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and then return to it”, is acknowledged by the whole civilized world.⁸ There is also the consensus regarding the right of any state to limit the access of foreigners on its territory. The key problems seem to be: what are the limits of actions the liberal state can undertake to defend internal security, and how these two commonly accepted rules can be reconciled nowadays (if at all)?

From the perspective of the non-governmental organization and the problems discussed here, some CIA⁹ report theses seem particularly interesting. The report claims it to be necessary for the global security to strengthen the steering role of the national states and international structures, both regional and global. It is contrary to

⁸ Zolberg, A.R, 2000, ‘Matters of State: Theorizing Immigration Policy’, in P. Kasinitz, Ch. Hirschman i J. De Wind (eds.), *The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience*, New York: Russel Sage Foundation.

the recently advocated thesis of “capital steering”, i.e. limiting and substituting the defense and socio-economic role of the nation state. The theses of the CIA report are worth discussing at a wider forum, consisting of not only political scientists, but also political economists and businessmen.

It is difficult to give immediately the answers to all the questions posed here, but it is certainly worth posing them now. Ethnic questions have been a vital and sensitive issue for Western democracies for a long time. With 10 new member states, with their own historical burden and lacking experience in dealing with immigration, the problem of finding proper solutions concerning not only the border controls, but also the relations between majority and minority, will cease to be merely a Central European issue but the important question for the whole Europe.

⁹ Global trends 2015: A Dialogue about the Future With Non government Experts, Washington, 2000.

Center for International Relations

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The Center for International Relations (CIR) is an independent, non-governmental establishment dedicated to the study of Polish foreign policy as well as those international political issues, which are of crucial importance to Poland. The Center's primary objective is to offer political counselling, to describe Poland's current international situation, and to continuously monitor the government's foreign policy moves. The CIR prepares reports and analyses, holds conferences and seminars, publishes books and articles, carries out research projects and supports working groups. Over the last few years, we have succeeded in attracting a number of experts, who today cooperate with the CIR on a regular basis. Also, we have built up a forum for foreign policy debate for politicians, MPs, civil servants, local government officials, journalists, academics, students and representatives of other NGOs. The CIR is strongly convinced that, given the foreign policy challenges Poland is facing today, it ought to support public debates on international issues in Poland.

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