

HOSTILITY TOWARDS MIGRANTS: THE RESULT OF POOR COMMUNICATION OR JUST A CRUEL REALITY?

Mihail ORZEAȚĂ¹

¹Prof., PhD, „Apollonia” University of Iași, Romania

Corresponding author: Mihail Orzeată; e-mail: morzeata@yahoo.com

Abstract

Hostility towards migrants exists among the people from transit and host countries stimulated by far right politicians, mass-media and criminal activities produced by some of the migrants. Terrorists and extremists hide among honest migrants. The negative effects of migration significantly influence the people's attitudes. In order to attract higher audience and financial benefits, some media editors and owners together with a number of journalists disobey the journalistic deontological code by supporting either migration or anti-immigration parties. Building fences and walls on the borders of some countries does not significantly reduce the flow of migrants.

Keywords: migration, anti-immigration, terrorist migrants, migration controversies, migration effects.

1. INTRODUCTION

The theme of migration is of great importance nowadays and has become “a priority for the international community” (United Nations, n.d.) through its complexity and the effects that it has on the individuals and communities of the migrant's country of origin, of transit and of destination.

The complexity of the migratory process stems from its proportion – spatial, temporal and according to the number of people involved – and also from the effects that it has on the international community as a whole. The effects of migration are both beneficial and negative but the perception of the individuals and of the communities influenced by the process are different because of the level of information and interests, generating action options among them, measures, solutions and attitudes which take on very diverse shapes.

In order to understand the complexity of the migratory process and of the factors that influence the for and against opinions related to the

migration of individuals and communities we have to present the context in which it takes place so that we can draw some pertinent conclusions about the current situation and to forecast its evolution. We also aim to highlight the role of mass-media in the development of the migratory process and in influencing the for and against opinions on the theme of migration.

In the end we shall offer some proposals and solutions in order to reduce the negative impact of migration on the individuals and the communities from the transition and destination states of the migrants.

2. MIGRATION: DEFINITION, TYPES OF MIGRATION AND TYPES OF MIGRANTS

Even though migration has been a characteristic of the human communities right from their beginning on Earth, (WILLIAMS, n.d.) we still do not have a definition and a classification of migrants unanimously accepted by the international community.

The documents of the *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* (UNESCO) show that migration has to be understood as “crossing the border between two political and administrative units for a minimum period of time. It includes the refugees, the deported, the uprooted and the migrants due to economic considerations” (UNESCO, n.d.).

UNESCO does not include in the category of migrants tourists and the people who are obliged to change their country of origin due to the transfer of territory between states (UNESCO, n.d.). (Here are some examples of border changes: the separation of India from Pakistan in 1947

(THACKRAH, 2009); some hundred thousand Russian-speaking people from Latvia and Estonia became stateless following the dissolution of USSR, in 1991, because the authorities from these Baltic states withdrew their citizenship (The Guardian, 2015); some hundred thousand "Romanes" for Yugoslavia became stateless after the dissolution of the Yugoslav federative state in 1991 (The Guardian, 2015); the separation of the Serbian province of Kosovo from Serbia in 1999, followed by the declaration of its independence in 2008 (BILEFSKY, 2008); the separation of the separatist regions Abkhazia and South Ossetia in 2008 and the declaration of their independence (LEVY, 2008) etc.).

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), belonging to the UN, defines migration as "any type of human movement, no matter the distance and length, composition and reasons and it includes: refugees, deported, migrants due to economic reasons and the people who move due to other reasons, including family reunification (International Organization for Migration, n.d.)."

The definitions of migration and of the categories of migrants included in the regulations of the UN High Commissioner for refugees, of the International Migration Organization, of the UN Agency for Refugees, of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) etc. are in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from 1948.

Including "the people who move due to other reasons" (International Organization for Migration, n.d.) in the category of migrants together with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from 1948 according to which every man has the right "to look for and to enjoy asylum in other states in order to be protected against persecution" (GOODWIN-WILL, 1967) influences both the status of the migrants and the transition and adoption states' attitude towards the migrants.

The differences of approach included in the definitions of migration and of the types of migrants in the documents of UN's profile agencies and in the official documents of the states determine transit and adoption state institutions to offer social and medical aid to the people who

are regarded as legal migrants, whereas the other people will be treated as illegal migrants. On the other side, from the provision of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from 1948 and from IOM's definition one can understand that the states are obliged to accept any person or group of people that declares itself/themselves as asylum-seeker/asylum-seekers, refugee/refugees etc. The realities of the previous years showed that some migrants are supporters of terrorism (GOODWIN-WILL, 1967), extremisms or broke the law in their countries or are internationally wanted fugitives etc.

In order to prevent access to the people who have hostile intentions on their territories the states have taken measures to verify the migrants and to forbid access to those who have committed illegalities or who do not meet the requirements in order to ask for asylum or to be accepted as refugees, immigrants, exiled etc. (In accordance with the UNESCO Glossary on migration, illegal migrants are "those who want to enter another country, usually looking for a job, without having the necessary documents and the proper permit offered by that particular state") (NEWTON, 2015). Therefore, states use their right to be sovereign and to decide who, when and under what circumstances has the right to enter their territory. The states' attitudes of controlling the migratory flow on their territories are considered non-compliant with the international regulations both by the representatives of the UN organizations and profile agencies and by the majority of nongovernmental organizations whose main field activity is to protect human rights.

Speaking about migration at an international level, the general manager of IOM, William Lacy Swing stated that: "one out of seven inhabitants of our planet is a migrant" because about 1 billion people are being driven out of their residence by force (64,3 billion) or they are international migrants (244 million) or internally relocated (at least 750 million). This is why UN profile agencies are overbusy because, according to William Lacy Swing, states will make use of their right to be sovereign by controlling migration (FALK, 2016).

Human right militants focus on the ethical side of the problem of migration ("why do people migrate, how do they migrate and what

impact does migration have on the destination, transit and origin states and whether or not states should encourage, discourage or limit migration”) (PARKER, 2007) and they ask the states to treat migrants as human beings, no matter their status – legal or illegal, voluntary or forced, asylum-seeker, immigrant, exiled or refugee (DAVID, 2016).

3. THE EFFECTS OF MIGRATION

In order to correctly assess the individuals and the communities’ attitude towards migration one has to be aware of both the positive and negative effects of the process. There are some controversies when it comes to the effects of the migration process. However, most experts and analysts consider that:

a) the most important beneficial effects are:

- migrants perform jobs that the autochthonous do not want or they cannot perform;
- migrants work more hours and on lower salaries than those of the autochthonous;
- migrants contribute to the economic prosperity of their adoption states;
- migrants contribute to enriching the cultural diversity of their adoption states (Berlin Institute for Comparative Social Research, 2006).

b) the most important negative effects for the adoption/destination states are the following:

- high accommodation, food and medical aid costs and the migrants’ integration in the adoption community (learning the language, preparing for a job, learning the national laws, knowing the cultural particularities etc.) (Berlin Institute for Comparative Social Research, 2006);
- decrease in the resource volume available for the native population (financial, material, medical etc.) (SMALE, 2017);
- increase of unemployment and of inflation (Australian Government, Productivity Commission, 2006);
- increase in the housing needs and in their prices;
- numerical and heterogenic increase of population by changing the ethnic and

religious composition of the communities in which the migrants were adopted and a decrease in their social cohesion (SAGGAR et al., 2012; Australian Government, Productivity Commission, 2006);

- amplifying the racial and xenophobe feelings among the autochthonous population (NOSSITER, 2017);
- proliferation and the increase of extremist parties which promote a xenophobe and racist discourse (Globalization 101, n.d.);
- increase in the politico-diplomatic tensions among the migrants’ states of origin and those of transit and destination;
- the refusal of some types of migrants to get integrated in the adoption societies by not acknowledging the state’s authority and by promoting their own laws and lifestyle (some groups of Sunni Muslims imposed sharia in the areas of the European states that adopted them) (NIMMO, 2015);
- some migrants may have infectious diseases and if they are not detected on time they may cause epidemics or even pandemics (Berlin Institute for Comparative Social Research, 2006);
- stimulating the migration of other people by reuniting the families of the migrants and attracting their relatives and friends towards the adoption states;
- committing terrorist attacks in the adoption states (Freedom House, 2017);
- violent clashes between the locals and the migrants or between migrants of different ethnicities and confessions (NIMMO, 2015);
- some groups of migrants and their descendants may represent a real fifth column (HOHMANN, 2015; MASON, 2015) in the case of some clashes between the origin and the adoption states. (Professor Idean Saleyhan considered that “the flow of refugees among states significantly increases the probability of some military clashes between those particular states ... [because] they are not only some unhappy products of the war but they can also represent some conflict catalysts, including among states (SALEHYAN, 2007).”)

4. THE MEDIA COVERAGE EFFECTS OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF MIGRATION ON THE INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES FROM THE TRANSIT AND ADOPTION STATES

The debates on migration and migrants reached the political area and that of mass-media experts and they contribute to influencing the population from the adoption and transit states.

The most important topics approached are those for and against migrations whose supporters and promoters seem to have not only different but also irreconcilable opinions and this makes some UN officials and experts consider that “the debates (on the theme of migration) could last forever (PARKER, 2007).”

Although the deontological code of the journalists obliges people who work in mass-media to be objective, impartial and to present reality without interpreting it, some of them became supporters of the opinions expressed by the far-right politicians, others of the militants for human rights, or of the representatives of non-governmental organizations, such as: Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Doctors without frontiers etc.

At the same time, the owners of the press agencies, radio or TV stations accept and even encourage the broadcast of points of view that are for or against migration and migrants and especially about the current and potential threat represented by the migration and the migrants (BURLEIGH, 2015; BELL, 2014), the terrorist attacks and other crimes committed by them (NOWRASTEH, 2016; START, n.d.; CNN, n.d.) as these are subjects that “sell well,” “are demanded by the public” and help achieve a good rating.

The everyday bombarding of readers, viewers and listeners with news and images (photos, films etc.) about hundreds or even thousands of migrants who board on very small, old and unsecure ships in order to cross the Mediterranean Sea from Turkey or from the North of Africa to Europe generated a wave of compassion and sympathy among a part of the EU states’ population. Some comments belonging to the

authors of the articles and reports on migrants describe them as having “a cruel faith” because they had to leave their homes and even countries to save their lives threatened by the ruthless jihadists enrolled in the army of the self-proclaimed state of Iraq and of Syria/ ISIS or in terrorist organisations such as Boko Haram, Al Qaeda etc.



Fig. 1. Migrants lined up along North African coast and ready to enter Europe (ROBERTS, 2014)

The news and images on migration and migrants are sometimes accompanied by statistics and images about the innocent victims of the war’s horrors – children who have to join their parents in a journey full of dangers, which, at times, becomes fatal. The image with the Syrian boy, Alan Galip, who drowned because the ship he was in sunk (SMITH, 2015) had a stronger impact on the international community than the 2015 news that approximately 3500 migrants died in an attempt to cross the Mediterranean Sea (Amnesty International, 2016).



Fig. 2. Shocking images of drowned Syrian boy show tragic plight of refugees (SMITH, 2015)

Compassion for the migrants determined some states and their people to offer them support in order to manage to integrate in their new country. Some of these initiatives, whose results were extensively presented in the media, belonged to some charity organisations from Canada. The initiative consisted in Canadian families "adopting" Syrian families for a period of one year. During this time Canadians offered them accommodation, some money and English classes. At the end of the period Syrian children had learned English and they were studying in Canadian schools but their parents were not able to speak English, they could not manage by themselves in the cities and they could not find a job. Therefore, Canadian "sponsors" considered that they took too much care of the Syrians and that the Syrians did not put in enough effort to integrate themselves in the host society (KANTOR & EINHORN, 2017).

Noticing the violence of the anti-migration attitudes of some politicians who discredit those who promote the positive aspects of migration, Micolaj Wrzecionkowski considers that the migrants are just "scapegoats" in order to explain the socio-economic problems of the adoption states." (WRZECIONKOWSKI, 2012)

The intense coverage of some bad deeds committed by the migrants, such as the terrorist attacks in Paris, London, Brussels etc., the rapes, sexual harassments and other criminal actions whose authors are migrants contribute to influencing a part of the population from the adoption states into adopting racist and xenophobe attitudes.

The spaces allocated by the international media in order to present the criminal actions committed by the migrants (SCHMID, 2016; KOSLOWSKI, 2012; CUTLER, 2010) in EU states, USA and Canada and the negative effects of migration were and still are much more generous than those dedicated to the beneficial effects of migration. The images with illegal migrants jumping or going through holes in the fences of some states' borders or those with other migrants waiting for the right moment to hide inside the trucks that go through the Channel Tunnel in order to get to the United Kingdom are presented on a regular basis on European TV channels. The news about the armed attacks committed by

migrants or those about the cars driven by migrants that deliberately attack various crowds gathered at anniversary events or concerts appear almost every week. The content, frequency and the abundance of violent actions committed by the migrants instilled a feeling of fear among the EU population, (CRABTREE & KLUGH, 2017) and the American population (SWAN, 2014; Associated Press in Pretoria, 2017) and this led to an increase in the anti-migration attitudes (FOSTER, 2017) in those particular countries.

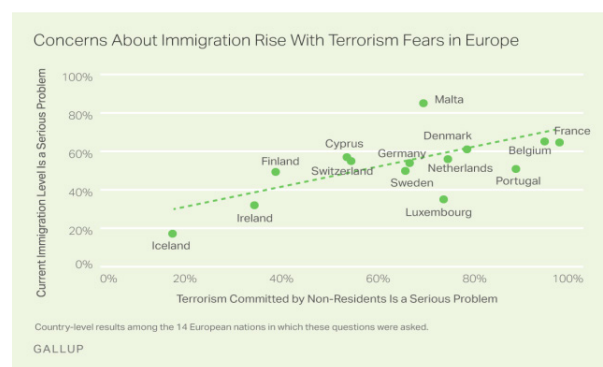


Fig. 3. Terrorism, Migration Trouble Many in Europe (CRABTREE & KLUGH, 2017)

Because of the pressures from conservative and far-right politicians, the governments of most of the above mentioned states adopted normative acts or changed the existing ones in order to forbid migrants from entering their territory and to be able to reject (deport) (SMALE, 2017) those that may cause security problems (D'VERA, 2015; GUYETTE, n.d.).

Also, some states decided to build walls (TARA, 2015), others raised fences (BANCO, 2015) at the borders they consider vulnerable to illegal migration. These measures did not have the expected results because they insignificantly reduced the migratory flow, they stimulated an inventory of the migrants who cut or jumped fences (PARK, 2015) or who built tunnels under the walls and fences or who used human traffickers to reach the places they aimed.



Fig. 4. Europe's Migration Crisis (BAMBINOIDES, 2015)

5. CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS

The faulty communication in the problem of migration and migrants appeared for some journalists on their own initiative or because they were forced by the owners to take partisan positions and to support for or against opinions on the theme of migration.

A prevalent emotional approach to the effects of migration and the use of omission on the part of some journalists, who selected only those facts that supported their goals, contributed to influencing a major part of the population from the adoption states, who were divided into supporters or opponents of migration.

The measures taken by some states in order to limit migration – building fences or walls, forbidding some categories of migrants (of certain ethnicities (SHEAR, 2017) or confessions (HOHMANN, 2017) etc.), a higher number of controls and customs monitoring devices – did not significantly reduce the migratory flow (TAYLOR, 2015).

It is highly unlikely to stop migration because people migrate not only forced but also due to their own will. It is possible to reduce the migratory flow and its negative effect by eliminating, or at least, reducing the incidence of the causes that generate migration: poverty, armed clashes, disasters caused by people, discrimination or political and religious persecutions. Such a solution implies an efficient global coordination, responsibility on behalf of all state leaders and of international governmental and non-governmental organizations, patience, consistency and time.

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