

The sociological aspect of the migration of Macedonian Albanians as one of the effects of the global risk

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Abstract

The modern social life faces many challenges as is overloaded with insecurities whereupon many of these problems are directly related to the process of globalization as a social, economic, political and cultural phenomenon. Globalization is quite often blamed for the insecurities that people and societies in general face and these are usually viewpoints pointed out mainly by anti-globalists.

We are living the historical period of the effects of the globalization process. This process is characterized with an interactive content of economic, political, cultural, social elements, which certainly affect the transition countries too. The international economic, political and cultural interactions play a significant role in the process of movement of people from one place to another, regardless if they are developed countries, developing countries or countries in transition. The international migration is closely related to these interactions and influences these processes as well as it is also influenced by them. The international economic imbalance, poverty and ecological degradation, all combined with the lack of peace and security, with the violation of human rights and different levels of development of judicial and democratic institutions are the main factors that affect national migration.

Key words: Globalization, Migration, Social, Macedonia, risk

Globalization and social Processes

Globalization in its positive aspect is a motivating factor of the advancement of social processes in modern world through which these social processes in the modern world gain stronger and higher cohesion. Globalization helps nations and states get integrated. The content of this inter-planetary integration is characterized by the emergence of new values in the field of economy, politics, security, law, culture, etc., which establish new human and democratic relations. The expansion of these global relations contributed in the emergence of various different changes, which have to do with the new 21st century lifestyle. These trans-planetary and over-territorial relations influence the strengthening of trust and security among nations in many aspects: peace, criminal activity, ecological integrity, poverty, financial stability, employment, etc. However, there are some negative aspects that are attributed to globalization, such as greater differences between rich and poor countries, stimulation of inequalities at a global level, intensification of socio-pathological phenomena, migration and movement of people, etc. We can talk in this context about many challenges and problems, such as criminality, corruption, trafficking in human beings, international terrorism, migration, which in general emerge and even intensify thanks to global international relations. One of these problems, which countries in transition face with, is migration and movement of people. All of the countries in transition in the Balkans such as Macedonia, Kosovo,

Albania, etc., are struggling with this problem. Therefore, the immigration problem represents a challenge to their native countries as well as to the countries that receive these immigrants. The countries of final destination of these immigrants usually include Western Europe the access to which has been alleviated thanks to the visa liberalization procedures whereupon citizens of these countries are now allowed to freely travel to these countries. The very fact that a certain number of countries obtained the visa liberalization policy means that their citizens can freely travel and visit these European countries. However, if these kinds of movements gain momentum and become massive, then it may easily become a challenge and a problem for the transition countries as well as the EU ones. These kinds of problems are also part of their everyday activities even for countries, which have not obtained this kind of status yet. Various different misapplications and abuses occur in these countries when it comes to providing people with travel documentation in order to make it possible for them to travel abroad, especially to the countries of the EU, and then end up there as political or economic asylum seekers. Republic of Macedonia is one of the countries that are struggling with this problem, especially in those areas, which are mostly populated by Albanians. This problem started to get worse in 2009 and it has kept changing its track and shape. When speaking about the phenomenon of population migration or movements, we can say that they are processes that started long ago in history and are as old as the human society itself. This phenomenon is

multidimensional and multi-causative, which means that the migration problem as such is not a research focus of one discipline only, but it spreads to more than one and that there are numerous factors that influence this phenomenon.

Migration of Albanians

As far as the migration of Albanians is concerned, we can say that it is a very old issue that has followed this nation for many centuries. There is no doubt that it is a huge problem, which has been recycled from time to time and has changed its form and shape depending on different circumstances at different times throughout history. When talking about the problem of migration, we can freely say that Albanians have a bitter experience with it since they have quite often been forced to leave behind their households, their fatherland and go somewhere else. The migration problem of Albanians, seen from its historic point of view, can be divided into two types: (a) as a mandatory – violent migration as a result of the repressive totalitarian state policies in the past, and (b) as voluntary migration both of which have been very costly for the Albanian population. In recent years, this phenomenon has again gained momentum, especially when it comes to the migration of Albanians from Macedonia and the Preshevo Valley (in Serbia). Other than the violent deportation of Albanians carried out in a very thoroughly planned action by the dictatorial communist regime with the aim of ethnic cleansing of territories and change of ethnic structure of the population, the voluntary migration is based on people's free will, though again under the dictatorship of unemployment and poverty determinism. This phenomenon of massive displacement is very heinous and is ongoing especially in the municipality of Kumanovo, Likovo and the Preshevo Valley (or Eastern Kosovo). The massiveness and dynamics of this phenomenon in these areas have caused new social changes and movements, which we can notice in our social environment through the economic-political organization of people, cultural and social factors that are at the same time the main cause of these changes. The question is why is this phenomenon happening now and in these territories? Even though classified as voluntary displacement, in essence it is not such, since it contains in itself the imposition caused by various different factors, because after all no one is willing to leave their homeland for no reason at all. It is not easy to make that decision. One of the main factors that cause the above-mentioned phenomenon with regard to the Albanian part of the population in Macedonia, is the socio-economic factor which has left harsh traumas both in the economic and psychological aspect. In general, when it comes to the social stratification in Macedonia and the broader region in general, one can notice the existence of only two such strata – the rich and the poor. This means that the middle class does not exist at all. The lack of middle class causes huge imbalance between the other two strata as well as social, economic, political and cultural dissatisfaction.

Developed countries which are characterized with economic, political, social and cultural welfare, are countries in which the middle class prevails; they are also countries with high democratic and civic values.

Factors that stimulates Migration

The economic and social crisis Macedonia is facing with has caused a series of developments and changes in terms of the economic welfare of the population in this country and has basically worsened the living standard by increasing the level of poverty, unemployment, and the overall economic insecurity. Huge numbers are earning their living by receiving social financial assistance from the country, which, on the other hand, cannot even meet their needs for three days only, let alone a whole month or more. Again, the most badly struck regions are those in which military activities happened, such as the Likovo municipality and the Preshevo Valley. No investments at all have been made in these regions in the post-war period, because of which figures of poverty level, unemployment, lack of infrastructure and investments, migration, etc., have reached their climax. The everlasting socio-economic crisis has caused the emergence of spiritual and personality crisis in these people, which is usually manifested through socio-pathological behavior such as frustrations, nervousness, neurotic attitudes, etc. These have been the determining reasons and causes that forced many people to leave their homes in search for better future abroad, whilst forgetting the negative effects and consequences of such actions being far more multidimensional than the positive ones.

The factors that stimulate this form of migration of Albanians (and others) can be divided into three groups:

1. Cultural factors
2. Economic factors
3. Political factors
- 4.

The cultural factor is based on the system of values, which comprise the collective spirit, or the mentality of a nation. Since the economic crisis and unemployment have been a concerning issue for a very long time now, this also affects the system of values which at the time of migration/displacement they transform from traditional and homogenous values to modern heterogeneous ones. Therefore, the cultural factor at times of economic and spiritual crises weakens the social cohesion through the system of values and enables the emergence of a form of individualism as a way of living, which has somehow become one of the values of the modern western culture nowadays.

The economic factor includes a series of components which have to deal with the existence and survival of

citizens. There are several types of relationships within the economic activities which are related to earning one's living, having thus in consideration the domination of a certain economic branch over another one, which in turn prevents people from leading a decent life. E.g. in the Likovo municipality there are no other active economic branches apart from agriculture and cattle breeding. Since the agricultural sector is not proving to be profitable and it seems without perspectives in terms of the future development as well as the inability to choose other economic activities or alternative resources, migration remains as the only way to salvation and prosperity. This represents a real concern in the global human conscience since this missing right, i.e. employment, means destruction of the global society. When you are jobless, you lack one of the crucial elements of civic and personal security which is "feeling as being necessary to the others".¹

The political factor

The political factor is one of those, which in combination with the former two stimulates the dynamism of emigrational movements. This factor is more emphasized in multi-ethnic countries which are characterized with inter-ethnic tensions and spoilt relations. Two dimensions are typical of the political factor: the central state politics and the local-based one. In all of the countries where Albanians are considered minorities, such as Macedonia, Serbia (the Preshevo Valley and Montenegro), the political factor is more than evident. The investments in areas mostly inhabited by Albanians are at the lowest possible level. The Macedonian state politics itself exercises an unprecedented economic segregation when it comes to the division on ethnic lines and this also happens in settlements with mixed population, such as Skopje, Kumanovo, etc., where the differences in investments between the Macedonian and Albanian parts of the same city are more than visible.

What are the consequences of these displacements?

The migration process impels many other problems both on individual and collective grounds. We can therefore talk about a special migration culture which gathers different contradicting experiences: poverty, exploitation and class conflicts in the country of origin; isolation, cultural alienation and racism in the target country, etc.²

There is no doubt that the consequences from these movements and displacements are multi-dimensional and

harmful at all levels and in any context. As regards the individual context, the consequences can be seen in the physical and mental maltreatment especially in children. The process of settlement of these households in European countries can last for months and even years and the worst that can happen in this case is for them to be rejected and turned back to their homelands. This situation would cause additional sufferings and woes in those people because many of them borrow money from other people in order to get to their desired destinations and when they return without having the chance to even earn a cent, the situation becomes unbearable due to the huge debts that they have to pay back to the lenders.

In terms of the collective aspect the losses are again huge. They mostly refer to the socio-psychological context since once they settle down in their new countries, the inter-generational conflicts appear within the families themselves. The greatest loss occurs in the national aspect because the ethnic structure changes at the national level and this is more in favor of the biggest ethnic group. The reduction of the number of the Albanian population in Macedonia will bring along other defects of political character such as the decrease of the overall percentage of the Albanian population at the national level in Macedonia. These consequences are also noticeable in schools where the number of pupils and students is constantly decreasing. In other words, the loss at national level mostly relates to the displacement of the most vital part of the nation, among whom many are well-educated and qualified and for whom their own country does not care at all. The negative effects of migration also reflect in the target countries. Massive migrations from the countries in transition to those of the EU, as was the case with Belgium several months ago, will undoubtedly urge different problems in the social, economic, and cultural aspect within the target countries. All of these are problems which occur as a result of the emergence of modern global relations and developments, since not all countries are able to maintain the level of equality and social, political, economic and cultural welfare.

What is the solution of this issue?

There is a solution to every problem, because just as they happen they can be terminated. However, this solely depends on people's will and desire to overcome the existing problems, i.e. it depends on the political action of the state institutions in the country of origin and in the target country abroad.

As regards the country of origin, the problem of migration can be resolved in two instances:

- At the state level (central government)
- At a local level (local government).

The best way of resolving this problem is by coordinating political actions between the above-mentioned levels. The

¹ Kabo, Përparim "Autoritarizëm në tranzicion" – Albanian anthropology through globalizations, p.269. Tirana. 2006.

² "Migracijske teme" – Journal on migration and population research, nr.3-4, p.260, Zagreb, 1991

local self-government units will never be able to resolve these problems on their own. The migration problem will be resolved only when the state starts to invest in these underdeveloped regions and municipalities by creating new jobs and employing the youth. However, a very well-thought strategy needs to be designed and implemented in order to achieve these goals. On the other hand, in order to reduce the negative effects at a global level and improve the overall situation in this field, it is necessary to be intervened at an international level too, the initial stage being to visit these countries in transition and to analyze the possibilities for investments so that massive migration would be put under control. The global relations themselves intensified the polycentric actions and the states themselves became under-centralized and fragmented under modern leadership which can also be seen from the newly established interstate relations.³

In this context, these kinds of polycentric actions in global relations can help in resolving many problems, including the emigrational ones and as such they will serve as a positive example for the future generations in the region and wider in the world.

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³ Jan Art Sholte "Globalizacija", p.251. Skopje 2008