

OSCE/ODHIR HDIM 2012

Warsaw, Poland

Working Session 3: Humanitarian Issues and Other Commitments

Bianca Kaiser

Kemerburgaz University

Istanbul, Turkey

25 September 2012

Introduction

In my presentation, I will talk about our world that is increasingly characterized by transnationalization, and the opportunities and challenges deriving from this for migrants. Then, I will speak about the security discourse with regard to migration. After that, I will sketch the use of liberal citizenship regimes to integrate migrants and, in this context, the importance of double and multiple citizenship. Then, I will speak about internally displaced persons and refugees and, finally, outline my conclusions and some recommendations.

Migration and Transnationalism

Social formations and non-state co-operation across borders have received growing attention in the field of migration studies since the early 1990s. These transboundary exchanges are analyzed with respect to the intensity with which they occur, as well as in terms of their legal and politico-institutional regulation. Almost all migrants today are engaged in transnational activities, albeit to varying degrees. It has been found that the more cross-border activities and orientations migrants have, the stronger will be the intercultural and integration-related practices that they carry out in their respective resident states; in other words, they will be better integrated. Transnationalism and integration seem to be not only concurrent, but they appear to be mutually supportive processes. Despite the fact that transboundary ties are often not looked upon in a favourable way, and migrants are thus encouraged to “choose”

with respect to their identities and loyalties, institutional support should be given to encourage the continuation and deepening of these linkages and ties.

International migrants are both the subjects and objects of the processes of globalization. Contemporary technological developments of transportation and communication provide them with the chance to dwell on “both sides of the river” - by actually living in the country of destination and, at the same time, still symbolically living in the country of origin. Migrants are able to construct a “third space” in between, or rather beyond, the homeland and the hostland. Therefore, migration policies should not be reduced to cultural assimilation and homogenization because this is a rather outmoded perception of integration, which fails to include several vital dimensions of integration. In the age of globalization, the integration of migrants is no longer a one-way process. Integration policies need to be transnationalized, with the involvement of not only the receiving country but also of the sending country, as well as supranational and international organizations like the EU, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE.

The Securitization of Migration

Especially since 9/11, the term “security” has started to go beyond its conventional meaning. While it used to be defined in political and military terms - in the sense of protecting the boundaries and integrity of the state and its values against ideological and military threats - it has nowadays also come to be related to issues such as migration, ethnic revival, religious revival, and identity claims. The fear of migrants and of “others” has come to categorize, stigmatize and couple migration with unemployment, drug trafficking, human trafficking, criminality and terrorism. When this is reinforced by the usage of xenophobic and heterophobic language, migrants are being de-humanized.

It is important to note that this new security discourse conceals the fact that ethnic, religious and identity claims of migrants as well as their perceived reluctance to

integrate actually often result from existing structural problems that they are experiencing, such as poverty, unemployment, discrimination, xenophobia, heterophobia, nationalism and racism. The response of migrants to the demise of the redistributive justice of the welfare state, especially in Western Europe, and the exclusion from political participation has frequently paved the way for an essentialist form of resistance in the form of ethno-cultural and religious resurgence, generating an alternative discourse of politics along these lines.

Integration and Citizenship Regimes

The awarding of citizenship to migrants can be a very efficient integration tool. Immigrants attain the fullest degree of political rights if they become citizens of their country of settlement, and it de-motivates them to mobilize along ethnic, cultural, or religious lines. Whereas the traditional citizenship discourse is inclined to advance the interests of the majority national group over the interests of migrants, liberal and moderate citizenship laws can be anticipated to considerably diminish the over-emphasis put on ethnicity, religiosity and nationality by migrant groups.

Another issue to be taken into account along with the institution of liberal citizenship with respect to the integration of migrants is the issue of double and, possibly, multiple citizenship. Migrants may not seek naturalization because they would otherwise lose citizenship, hereditary titles, or the right to own property in their country of origin. Thus, the introduction of double, or even multiple, citizenship becomes very important for migrants in order to integrate politically and be able to make political claims.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

As we know, IDPs are defined as persons, who have been forced to leave their homes in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence or natural and human-made disaster - economic reasons are explicitly excluded from this definition - and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.

IDPs mostly prefer to migrate to urban areas. The disadvantaged circumstances with which IDPs are confronted within their new urban settings bring about diverse problems and conflicts, which may not only threaten their own existence, but also that of socio-cultural, economic and political development and, thus, the stability of the wider society. New scientific approaches are needed to analyse individual and structural conditions for an effective integration of IDPs into both the local as well as national economy, and also to analyze and evaluate the efficiency of return-policies. The severity and difficulty of problems with which IDPs are faced, stem often from the fact that, unlike refugees, IDPs remain within the borders of their country and become “internal refugees”, without the possibility of legal international protection and with only limited international humanitarian attention. Most of the NGOs or academic researchers in the field cannot go beyond formulating recommendations and urge the respective governments to respond more effectively to the vulnerability of IDPs.

The Syrian Conflict and Refugee Crisis

And just a very short note on the Syrian conflict and refugee crisis. The ongoing crisis in Syria is starting to have a significant impact on the OSCE region. Turkey now hosts more than 83.000 Syrian refugees on her south-eastern border, and Jordan around 180.000 refugees. Both countries have so far managed to accommodate the refugees through their own resources but are now calling for more international support. It has recently started to become visible that the neighbouring countries of Syria are experiencing some spill-over effects of the conflict. For instance, some clashes have been reported between the local Alevi-Nusayri-origin Arab residents of Antioquia (Hatay) in Turkey and the Sunni-origin Syrian refugees who are accommodated in the refugee camps in that area. Similar local conflicts have also been reported to take place in Lebanon between Sunnis and Alevis.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Just as migration itself is characterized by transnationalization, migration policies of the OSCE member states should also be transnationalized increasingly.
2. The securitization of migration and obstacles to political participation have given rise for migrants to engage in activities of ethnic, cultural and religious resurgence. This could be counterbalanced with appropriate policies of inclusion and increased opportunities for political participation.
3. Citizenship laws should not be based on prescribed cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic qualities. Access to double and multiple citizenship should be eased and not be viewed as an obstacle to integration.
4. IDPs are in need of special protection, and OSCE member states should work out more efficient ways to ensure this. More academic research is needed in this area and close cooperation should take place between the academia, NGOs and governmental institutions. Such cooperation would, of course, also be beneficial in other areas of migration as well.
5. The OSCE member states should be aware of the externalities and potential spill-over effects of the conflict in Syria into neighboring countries.
6. More generally speaking, the capacity to develop empathy for migrants and refugees needs to be considerably strengthened through improved opportunities for the receiving society to have more insights into the lifeworlds of migrants and refugees.
7. The political discussion on migration and integration should shift away from multiculturalism to interculturalism, a concept that engages both sides – migrants and the receiving society – and which conceives of culture not as a static but as a constantly changing phenomenon and process.

Thank you for your attention!