

Securitization of Migration in the Post-Social State:
From Welfarism to Prudentialism

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I have always perceived Migration Studies as an interdisciplinary field providing me with the tools to scrutinize not only the life worlds of immigrants and their descendants, but also the ways in which the receiving countries have politically, socially, culturally, economically and legally changed over time. This is why I have chosen to try to grasp the changing habitats of meaning of migrants and minorities in order to actually comprehend majority societies. I recently worked and published on the state of Muslim origin migrants in Germany, France, Belgium and the Netherlands. In these works, I claim that the fear of migrants and Muslims prevalent in the West cannot have material sources; it is in fact a constructed and fabricated fear, serving the interests of nation-states which are no longer equipped with the tools to redistribute justice and peace equally. Migration has for a long time been a source of content and happiness for the West. But now it is seen as a source of instability and insecurity. I have come to the conclusion that most of the controversies and debates on migration have essentially been designed to conceal the most persistent structural problems leading to inequality, poverty and discrimination. I also find it very worrying to see that migration is being very disapprovingly perceived at a time when net migration is becoming zero, or even (-) minus in most of the European countries, and when actually western countries literally need new migrants. What I will do now is to raise two important issues with regard to the immigrants settled in western countries. One is the *securitization of migration*, which posits any kind of migrant as a danger to national, social and cultural security of the receiving society. The other is the contemporary conditions of migrants in what I call *post-social state*, where welfarism is now replaced by prudentialism in a way that leads the poor and subordinated migrants to generate their own support mechanisms in the form of parallel communities.

Securitizing Migration

Issues of all kind have recently become security issues through a process of social construction, namely "securitisation" (Doty, 2000: 73). As the main rationale of the security

discourse seems to have shifted from protecting the state to protecting society, so protection of society against any kind of 'evil' has become the pillar of the security discourse in a way that has popularised the term security in all spheres of life. The securitisation of migration, or in other words stigmatization of migrants, became a vital issue after September 11 attacks in the United States and related ones in other places, notably Madrid (11 March 2004) and London (7 July 2005). Much of the response to these attacks has focused on immigration issues, even though the perpetrators of the bombings were mostly product of the 'society' they attacked (Collyer, 2006: 267). The categorization of those responsible as migrants seems to be a systematic attempt to externalize the structural failures produced by the social-political structure. The security discourse conceals the fact that ethnic/religious/identity claims of migrants and their reluctance to integrate actually *result from* existing structural problems of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, xenophobia, nationalism and racism. It is likely that modern states tend to employ the discourse of securitisation as a political technique that can integrate a society politically by staging a credible existential threat in the form of an internal, or even an external, enemy, an enemy that is created by security agencies (like the police and the army) through categorising migration together with drug trafficking, human trafficking, criminality and terrorism (Huysmans, 1998, 2006).

Immigration was a source of content for the western states in 1960s and 1970s, but now it is being defined as a *threat*, or a *danger*, not only to the survival of the state, but also to societal and cultural security. Such *discourses of danger* seem to distance migrant communities from incorporating themselves into the political, social, economic and cultural spheres of life of majority society in a way that prompts them to invest in their ethno-cultural and religious identities.

As one could see the issue of the so-called 'illegal migrants' has lately been picked up by Western political elite and state administrations as the very source of some endemic problems such as unemployment, violence, terror and some other social and cultural problems. The way illegal migration has been perceived also shapes the public perception of regular migrants. Then, the immigrant, the stranger, the excluded, the one who does not belong to the prescribed national unity is ideologically portrayed by the conventional and culturalist elite as the "enemies within". This line of thinking which excludes those who do not culturally, ethnically and religiously belong, presumes the immigrant against whom the nation should be redefined.

Migrants in Post-Social State: From Welfarism to Prudentialism

Lately, it has often been claimed that the main reason for the so-called "incapacity" of migrants to integrate into social, political and economic spheres of life of receiving societies, and thus to become more affiliated with ethnicity, religiosity and violence is their ethno-cultural and religious distinctness from that of the majority society (Schlesinger, 1991; Hughes, 1993; and Scheffer, 2000). It seems to me that the rise of such a culturalist and religious discourse conceals deep-rooted structural problems such as deindustrialization, poverty, unemployment, exclusion, racism, heterophobia and xenophobia, which actually distance migrant communities from structural integration. It should be kept in mind that it is actually the processes of globalization and deindustrialization, or post-industrialization, which have eventually prompted the uneducated, unqualified, unpropertied, subordinated and alienated immigrant communities to express themselves in public space through ethnicity, culture, religion and sometimes violence. Explaining the "incapacity" of migrant origin individuals through their ethno-cultural, civilisational and religious differences is a rather reductionist perspective reducing the socially and politically constructed processes of material exclusion to cultural and religious reasons.

The state of structural exclusion and dispossession the migrants are in cannot be simply described by "isolation" or "marginality", but in some cases with a term like "hyper-isolation". Migrants in the suburbs of large cities attend their isolated schools, pray at their mosques, shop at their isolated stores and develop their own marginal economy. The advance of the migrants' middle-class from the suburbs to the new neighbourhoods has left only the poorest of the poor behind – increasingly distanced from the urban economy at large, and deprived of the institutional support that allows a bare existence in the ghettos of a hostile world. In an age when industrial production is in rapid descent, these people cannot adapt to the changing economy, and fall into a state of constant joblessness, exclusion and loneliness (Kivisto, 2002). What can best describe the viewpoint of these "hyper-isolated" people is "*nihilism*", in other words, "*anarchism*". Religion and ethnicity offer attractive "solutions" for people entangled in intertwined problems. It is not surprising for masses who have a gloomy outlook of the future, who cannot benefit from the society and who are cast aside by global capitalism to resort to religion, ethnicity, language, and tradition, all of which they believe cannot be pried from their hands, and to define themselves in those terms.

The fact that migrant communities and their descendants form their own parallel communities in their countries of settlement seems to be encouraged by the *post-social*

state, which has already left her major responsibilities of education, health, security and pension services to a multitude of specific actors such as individuals, families, communities, localities, charities and so forth (Inda, 2006: 12). Now, individual actors, families, migrants, excluded and subordinated groups are expected to secure their well-being. The market is believed to be playing a crucial role in assuring the life of the population with respect to prevention of the risks related to old age, ill health, sickness, poverty, illiteracy, accidents and so forth. Thus, the rationality of the *post-social state*, or *market state*, is extended to all kinds of domains of welfare, security and health, which were formerly governed by social and bureaucratic state (Inda, 2006: 13). Public provision of welfare and social protection ceases to exist as an indispensable part of governing the well-being of the population. Communities of all sorts have become essential in the age of post-social state, because the post-social form of *governmentality* requires the fragmentation of the social into a multitude of markets and the new *prudentialisms*. This implies that individuals are expected to take proper care of themselves within the framework of existing free market conditions; *social welfare* state is no longer there to finance and to secure the well-being of the population as the prudent, responsible, self-managing and ethical political subjects are in charge to take over her role. This is what we call the transition from *welfarism* to *prudentialism*.

As a consequence of this shift from *welfarism* to *prudentialism*, social policy now is increasingly becoming based upon the notion of *stakeholdership*, promoting the idea that individuals can be responsabilised and empowered by social policy to become a part of the club of stakeholders (O'Malley, 2000; and Gilling, 2001). The logic of stakeholdership is to pathologise and blame those who fail to become stakeholders. Now, being a respectable working person requires acting in a *prudent* way more than ever. Being prudent refers to joining insurance schemes, making regular payments in order to insure his/her own life, and that of his/her family members against any possible misfortune (Defert, 1991). This kind of *prudentialism* can actually be considered as a technology of *governmentality* that responsabilizes individuals for their own risks of unemployment, health, poverty, security, crime and so on. It can be seen as a practice producing individuals who are responsible of their own destiny with the assistance of a variety of private enterprises and independent experts that are the indispensable actors of free market economy.

Social policy is characterised by a creeping conditionality not only in the developed world but also in some parts of the developing world. This is also the case in the migration context. Provision of social benefits for the poor is made conditional upon their willingness

to seek employment, undertake training, attend health clinics, and/or send their children to school. Neo-liberal economics is harnessed to an illiberal paternalist social agenda that associates poverty with individual irresponsibility, or with the failure to manage risk.

Globalism has not only equipped migrants and minorities with certain reflexivities to come to terms with the detrimental effects of the processes of globalisation, it has also produced its own neo-liberal form of governmentality, which has transformed the modern state from investing in the idea of *welfarism* to investing in the idea of *prudentialism*. The idea of *prudentialism* requires social policy to be gradually based upon the notion of stakeholderism, and promotes the idea that individuals should be responsabilised and empowered by social policy to become a part of the club of stakeholders. Prudentialism is all about social Darwinism, which undermines the incapacity of subaltern individuals such as immigrants, who are not able to look after their certain needs due to the structural constraints creating an unequal stance for them in the spheres of education, labour market and politics. Immigrant origin individuals respond accordingly to the demise of the *welfare state* policies, and thus to the rise of the *workfare state*. Such *workers without work* who have been structurally deprived of education, qualification and compassion have been the first losers of the globalizing neo-liberal policies. Unemployment, poverty, exclusion, institutional racism, and discrimination have become the main reasons for immigrants origin populations and their descendants to question the political and legal structure of their countries of settlement in a way that has made them hesitate to integrate. Instead they have tended to find a refuge in the comfort of certain *communities of sentiments* such as religious, ethnic, cultural and fellowship communities. Such communities of sentiments provide immigrants and their children with a safe haven protecting them against uncertainty, insecurity, ambiguity, poverty, unemployment and exclusion. Hence, ethnicity and religiosity seem to be some of the most versatile tactics for migrants to come to terms with the existing structural problems.

To conclude, issues of migration should be immediately desecuritized. Political elite and the media as well as the non-governmental organizations should try to generate an alternative discourse in order to challenge the hegemonic politics of fear. Culturalist discourse based on the assumption of clash of civilizations should also be immediately discarded as it is far from understanding the actual world. Eventually, we all should try to find ways to restore the welfare state in order to redistribute justice more equally. These discursive changes are essential for us to start talking about real integration of migrants and

their children. And one should also be reminded that the issue of integration of migrants cannot only be reduced to cultural and linguistic competence; it is actually more than that starting with economic, social and political inclusion/incorporation.