

Migration as an Early European Reality

Dorina Gjipali PhD Cand.

Lecturer at Luarasi University – Tirana, Albania

dorinadervishaj@yahoo.com

Abstract

The contemporary phenomenon of migration has already reached global dimensions and differs from the early migrations for the reasons as well as for the course of migration flows. This article aims to provide an overview of the historical evolution that has characterized migration in the European Continent. Passing in different historical stages it explains how Europe as a place of migrant's departure returns into migration destination. Migration occurs for many different reasons. An analysis of the reasons explains the value that they have been throughout history and how the motives that push entire populations to migrate are the deep needs, fear of war, fear of persecution, torture, till to the desire to improve the social status and the living conditions. And so that migration is not a simply free choice but a necessity. The fact that migration is a constant presence in our society, an ever-evolving phenomenon and that directly affects our societies, have been working impetus to this article.

Key words: European migration, migration flows, migration reasons, migration as an ever-evolving phenomenon, historical migration phases, etc.

Introduction

The human being, in its long history that begins before millions of years with primitive forms, has always shown a strong tendency to migrate, to be exact to move from their countries of origin in exploration of new territories (Simeon, 2014). Migration is a global phenomenon that affects the international community as a whole. It is difficult, almost impossible to find a country that has not generated migration during its history.

The universal nature of this phenomenon cannot be doubted; therefore many studies and researches have attempted to give a complete illustration. Awareness that migration has always characterized the life of human beings delivers a solid base to show how it has contributed to the formation of cultural, social and political identities over the years, and how it continues to have a key role in our societies (Gozzini, 2005).

Although contemporary migration has already reached global dimensions, it is different from the early migrations in some essential elements, among which form of migratory flows, the entry of new destination and departure of international migration; political and normative element takes a central role in determining the direction, selection and composition of flows, which are modeled on various migration policies being differentiated by objectives and socio-economic and political situations.

Contemporary migration, because of the intertwining of the political implications, social and economic problems that has been characterized, is much more difficult to read than the migration of the past decades, characterized mainly by economic reasons and linear and standardized directions. The transformation of Europe from country of departure into country of destination of flows, in particular, implies the need to rethink some of the classical theories about the causes that lead people to migrate, anchored essentially in the centrality of the factors attracting work from the outside: the massive migration of recent decades cannot be read only in function of countries' economic growth and demographic change.

The phenomenon of migration is rapidly evolving, changing, migratory flows display variable speed, both in space and time. One obvious way to create a general overview of the phenomenon and to focus the migration flows in the economic and political contexts in which they fall and to understand how they interact with society is the division of the migration in historical periods (Ambrosini, 2005).

Migration as an attribute of the human kind

The human kind, as it has already been recognized by all researchers, had its cradle in Africa, and then it moved slowly but steady, in every continent. This leads to the conclusion that the phenomenon of migration is as old as mankind.

Europe has been in its beginnings a transit country.¹ Ancient civilizations practiced nomadism especially looking for new territories where to hunt and even when settled civilizations before, as in Mesopotamia, migration continued, often due to war and hunger. Europe's population came from the southeast to northwest and from eastern Mediterranean in the British regions. This was a slow advancement in which migrants settled in new territories. This expansion depended from population growth on one hand and the availability of land on the other, this last one circumstance changed over time. In fact, in the history of the last two thousand years, with a world increasingly changing these conditions without a doubt were increasingly rare. Migrants should be measured with the local population negotiating modalities of coexistence, imposing or suffering them and depending on the strength of the relationship and circumstances (Livi Bacci, 2014).

In the first millennium of the Christian era, migration in Europe had sorts of invasions and occupations, as happened with the expansion of the Roman Empire, and later to its demise or with the Germanic peoples who invaded Europe.

Many of the migratory flows that characterized Europe's first millennium AD had the characteristics of invasion-occupation, so happened with the Germanic people that spread to Europe with the fall of the Roman Empire. The arriving of groups numerically rather modest compared with the local population but ride by the military and colonial ambitions. In the second millennium strike among others, eastward migration of the Germanic peoples in territories that were previously occupied by Slavs. Migration flows occur due to the high level of organization of the population and the fact that the local Slavic population was less evolved but also because the weather conditions were very favorable for farmers also the very short distances between areas of departure and arrival. German migrants had plows, tools that make possible deforestation and cultivation of difficult soil; Slavs practiced hunting and fishing (Livi Bacci, 2014).

Since 1500 Europe, from destination for migrants, became migrant's location (Discovery of America in 1492). By 1800, about one million people every century left the old continent to the Americas, a number that may seem large but not sufficient to impose on the new continent, language, religion and culture. The conditions favored this migration primarily related to new transport vehicles which were already faster with a greater workload and safer. Even the internal movement into the old continent was improved, with four-wheel drive trucks, the improvement of roads and construction of bridges and canals, had played an important role (Ambrosini, 2005).

The Great Migration

During the 1800, international migration grew because trains and steamships encouraged travel and makes it easier passing borders and oceans (Colucci and Sanfilippo, 2009).

Between 1814 and the Great War (1915-1918), left Europe tens of millions of people, the so-called Great Migration. The first wave of migration consisted of soldiers and officers, who were part of the armies during the Napoleonic wars and were left without work. The second wave of migration consisted of revolutionaries and Bonapartists escaped from French territory and the disillusioned of the failure of 1848 that saw the collapse of their homeland under foreign. At this stage there was displacement of people to the Americas, but also in the old continent. In the early twentieth century, Paris became the capital of refugees (Colucci and Sanfilippo, 2009). The third wave, in the end, had mainly economic character and continued until 1929, the year of the Great Depression in America. During this period, the uninterrupted flow of departures brought from Europe, over a century, about 50 million people, a figure underestimated by the history. It should also be mentioned that about a third of these migrants returned to their countries or migrated to new destinations (Livi Bacci, 2014).

In general, researchers are inclined to consider migration classical and medieval, as collective, as a migration of people, and modern and contemporary migration, as individual migration. After the conquest of the New World, colonies are a powerful attraction for those seeking jobs and new opportunities. Among those who left were many people who, not having

¹ *Migrazioni nel mondo antico*, Available at: <http://geostoria.weebly.com/migrazioni-nel-mondo-antico.html> (Accessed: 13 March 2016).

what to pay their way, they provided free work for several years, in exchange for the ticket. A separate discussion, but that does not affect the old continent geographically and therefore will not be treated, is the slave trade, millions of people were evicted forcibly from Africa to America to be enslaved.

Lack of historiography on the issue of migration has created for a long time the illusion that before the French Revolution, during the ancient regime, there was a silence and arrest phase, in which the villagers were strongly associated with the land.

In fact, those were years of great movements: from villages to city, or from village to village, from town to town and to new worlds. Moreover, the political debates of the time bouncing on the concern of their villager's departure, since it was believed that the power of a country depended on a large population. As a result, 1800 is not so much, or not only, the century of the great migration, but also of the discovery of this one, as a political, economic and social phenomenon (Livi Bacci, 2014).

Between 1800 and the start of the First World War the population of Europe had increased passing from 188 million to 548 million, and the pressure of population, together with an agriculture that grew slowly, constitutes a powerful impetus towards migration. We should not forget that in the early nineteenth century, while England had laid the foundations of Industrial Revolution in the rest of Europe, two-thirds of the population was still engaged in agriculture. Productivity had increased, thanks to the cultivation of new, improved and reduction techniques etc. But this productivity growth corresponded to the population growth that had caused the division of property and increase the number of landless families. This fact increased migration, which slowed only when labor force growth began to be used in the manufacturing industry. The road to the Americas continued apace until the great crisis of 1929.

In the early 1800, the passage of ships was not faster than at the time of Columbus; take five or six weeks from Liverpool to New York. In 1838, steam ship "Great Western" made the Atlantic crossing in 15 days and in 1880 Atlantic crossing was done in a week. From Spain (Galicia) to Cuba needed 38 days to sail in 1850, and about ten day's steamboat (Ambrosini, 2005).

The expansion of the railway network made it possible to quickly reach the ports of departure. The policies of different states of departure and arrival facilitated migration. For example, in England and in the Scandinavian countries since the early 1800s 30s were removed all restrictions to foreign countries. In Italy in 1901 it was repealed the law that provided for some types of controls, while in Austria, Hungary and Russia in late 1800 was granted the right to migrate. In the United States in 1862, President Abraham Lincoln issued the so-called Homestead Act that gave 65 hectares of land every family head that made the request and undertook to cultivate it (Livi Bacci, 2014).

It is believed that the Great Migration brought to America about 50 million people from Europe and it ended, according to some researchers with the First World War and in 1929 according to others with the so called the Great Depression or the Great Crisis. The uncertainty of the period in question also brings the uncertainty of numbers, which are approximate because many migrants fled the controls when moving from one place to another.

The twentieth century, the two world wars and the protraction of migration

The twentieth century was the century of great turmoil: the two world wars, the crisis of '29 in America, the division of Europe into two opposing blocks and then subsequent the fall of the Berlin Wall, the birth of the European Union, the end of colonialism, were all events that changed the direction of migration flows (Colucci and Sanfilippo, 2009).

Europe was almost always at the center of these cataclysms. Two world wars caused millions of deaths, the balance of which was added the destruction of 6 million Jews. Since 1900, the continent has seen a slow but inexorable demographic decline (Bernabei and Onder, 2010).

Despite this Europe continued to grow in number, in the twenty years 1950-1970 due to a positive economic period while in the twenty years 1990-2010 would have seen a contraction of its inhabitants if it wasn't for the immigration. Migration from the old continent in the new continent that marked the 1905 in 1914, 14 million individuals, had fallen to 6 million from 1921 to 1930, and only about a million people from 1930 to 1940. This decrease was due to declining demand for labor in countries of destination.

Since the Second World War, moreover, migration is characterized more by family reunions, but decreased gradually from the settlement of economic welfare between the two continents. On the other hand, migration that in Europe was 7 million from 1920 to 1940 rose to 28 million people in the twenty years from 1990 to 2010 (Livi Bacci, 2014).

Currently the old continent, which in 1900 was inhabited by 300 million people, has more than 700 million inhabitants, a figure that corresponds to the influx of migrants and EU joint of new member states. Of course it should not be forgotten that it was internal migration to the borders of Europe which is always directed from the economically weak countries, such as Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece towards the most plain, such as England, France, Germany, and Benelux. According to estimates of the United Nations, from 1950 to 1970 in Western Europe (France, Germany, Benelux and Switzerland) have absorbed a net migration of 6.6 million while southern (Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Yugoslavia) had generated a migration net (6.3 million), but opposite sign. The migration didn't come only from the most powerful countries of Southern Europe: Turks in Germany and citizens of former colonies (the Indian subcontinent, the Caribbean, Indonesia, the Maghreb) European countries contributed to these migration flows (Koser, 2008).

Since 1970, Europe from land of migration becomes attractive of migration. Internal flows from poor south to rich north had sit with declining birthrates in southern countries, with a leveling of per capita income and the reduction of the demand for labor. Ultimately, these were the same reasons that led to the termination of the great migration from the old continent to the new continent. In more developed economies starts to happen that locals not accept less qualified jobs, the worst paid and even dangerous that often adjusts the supply of labor migrants (Vecchia, 2014).

Conclusions

As a conclusion of this consideration of the early migrations that affected Europe as a departure or arrival country must return to the basic concept, migration remains an instrument to improve the living conditions more than economic conditions (Colucci and Sanfilippo 2009).

In fact, when there are no external factors, migrants evaluate the costs and benefits of their removal, making a balance that affects their family and community on the come. The gap between the living conditions of the country of departure and place of arrival is undoubtedly a powerful impetus for migration.

According to the economist and diplomat John Kenneth Galbraith migration had broken the old equilibrium of poverty that was characteristic of European countries. It was the strength of adaptation, called accommodation in conditions of poverty that were considered constant. Rural Masses of past centuries were "adapted" to the equilibrium of poverty, as well as measures contemporary Western that were used to live in a prosperous society, with high levels of consumption, were "adapted" to the footing of prosperity (Vecchia, 2014). For most of those who attempted migration, he worked and for their children, even better. Migration has rarely sought active efforts by governments. Migration rarely received governments consent or their supervision. When migration is fully experienced, not only allow the escape from poverty for those who are involved, but have eased the "exit" from the equilibrium of poverty for those who are motivated to pursue other opportunities (Galbraith, 1980).

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