

International Migration and the Politics of Identity and Security

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Abstract

Among the major contemporary themes in the field of Security Studies, the renewed concern with questions of identity occupies a central place. Identity concerns – augmented by migration flows – lie at the heart of the national security question. Migration issues are now matters of both high international politics and national security policies engaging the attention of heads of states and key ministries involved in defense, internal security, and foreign relations. Examples abound of migration flows include the rise of right-wing, anti-immigrant political parties in many Western states and the demand for anti-migration policies. How and why some migrant communities are perceived as threats to the identity of the receiving state is a complicated issue. A violation of the norms held by the host country is often regarded as a threat to its basic values and in that sense is perceived as a threat to its national security. Only an honest and continuous dialogue between hosting and migrant communities would prevent migrants' identity from becoming a security threat to the host state and society.

Introduction

For quite sometime, migration issues have become matters of high domestic and international politics engaging the attention of international organizations, as well as states; especially that of key ministries involved in defense, internal security, and foreign relations. Examples abound of migration flows include the rise of right-wing, anti-immigrant political parties in many Western states and the demand for anti-migration policies. Among other things, migration is widely viewed by the national publics of the host states as posing threats to their national security, as well as to international stability.

Although the separate literatures on migration and security have grown substantially since the early 1990s, few studies directly address the linkage between the two (Kleinschmidt 2006, 9-10; Guild and Selm 2005, 1-2). As Nazli Choucri suggests, "the connection between migration and security is particularly challenging and problematic because, migration, security, and the linkage between the two are inherently subjective concepts" (Choucri 2002, 98). In other words, they are dependent on "who is defining the terms and who benefits by defining the terms in a given way" (Choucri 2002, 98).

According to Choucri (2002, 99), several factors complicate the definition of key terms. In the domain of migration, for instance, such factors are the following:

- ◆ What ones sees depends on how one looks at it;
- ◆ Who counts defines who is counted; and
- ◆ What is counted depends on who counts, how, and why.

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In the security field, relevant factors include:

- ◆ One's security may be another's insecurity;
- ◆ Strategies designed to create security may actually enhance insecurity; and
- ◆ Security may be "objective" but in the last analysis it lies in the eye of the beholder and, consequently, "subjective".

Because migration and security are largely (although not entirely) subjective concepts, it appears that the Comprehensive Security framework of the Copenhagen School offers the most suitable epistemological approach to the examination of the linkage between the two (Buzan 1991a; Buzan & Waever 1998; Waever et al. 1993). The use of this epistemological position is further reinforced by the subjective nature of the concept of identity.

The Comprehensive Security approach is largely based on the Structural Realist framework of the English School of International Relations (Buzan et al. 1993), which offers a bridge between the "objective" approaches of Realism and Neorealism and the "subjective" accounts of Social Constructivism and Postmodernism. The Structural Realism of the English School asserts that "the logic of anarchy" operates in different ways at different levels of analysis and in the different security sectors. Moreover, the Comprehensive Security framework of the Copenhagen School clearly encompasses the structural approach of Nazli Choucri according to which the security calculus includes military security, regime security, and structural security (Choucri 2002, 100).

Spurred by the rise in ethnic and nationalist conflicts in the wake of the Cold War, the concern with questions of identity occupies a prominent position in post-Cold War Security Studies. If one adds "identity" to the security-migration nexus, the resulted linkage becomes even more complicated to study and analyze (Sackman et al., 1). Moreover, in the realm of social life this linkage has important political consequences, which call for political action.

To open up the question of the relationship of migration to identity and of identity to security is to open up some of the most difficult and controversial issues, which are both deeply embedded within, and fundamentally elided by, contemporary understandings of International Relations and Security Studies (Williams 1997, 1). The paper seeks to open up and explore these issues by developing an account of the relationship between migration, identity, and security in the emergence of a particular modern understanding of the relationship between politics and security.

The purpose of this paper is threefold: first, to discuss the linkage between identity, migration, and security and identify the actual and potential social and political implications stemming from this linkage; and second, to propose a way of addressing these consequences.

The Identity-Migration-Security Nexus

The need to examine identity as it is related to security and migration has been conditioned by political developments. For example, in the United States, two main political events are chiefly responsible for bringing into the forefront discussions about this linkage. First, the events of 9/11 and the subsequent fear of further terrorist activities within the territory of the U.S. have contributed to directing the American public's attention to a particular type of foreign immigrants, namely Arabs/Muslims (Tirman 2004). In the mind of many U.S. citizens, the Arab and Muslim communities in the U.S. are seen as potentially providing the fertile ground for breeding and harboring terrorists. In addition, many Americans believe that not only do Arabs/Muslims not share the same values and beliefs with them, but also the Arab/Muslim shared identity threatens the social and political identity of the United States.

These beliefs have three important consequences. First, they have helped to reinforce the idea of an American identity standing in opposition to the Arab/Muslim one. This, in turn, has caused many Arabs/Muslims living in the U.S. to identify further and stronger with their region of origin and religion. Moreover, one should not underestimate the influence of the radical Islamic ideology and its growing popularity among many young people within the Arab/Muslim *diaspora* in the United States. The relative lack of integration of the Arab/Muslim minority into the American society is also an important factor that has contributed to the strengthening of the Arab/Muslim identity. All these factors might make it easier for international terrorist groups to enlist U.S.-based comrades. Thirdly, as a way to bridge the social and political gap created by the operation of these two distinctive identities, multiculturalism has been proposed.

The growing influx of immigrants from Mexico into the U.S. has also brought onto the surface questions regarding “American” identity and the security of the United States. This fear has been captured in the work of Samuel Huntington (2004). As in the previous case, the Hispanic and American identities have been mutually reinforced, while multiculturalism is seen as a way to bridge the social and political gap created by the operation of these two identities.

In the European Union (EU), the traditional influx of immigrants both from former colonies and fellow Member States has been followed by two other types of immigration. First, the EU has attracted refugees from European and non-European countries that have faced internal turmoil, i.e., Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, etc. (Balzacq and Carrera 2005; Stivachtis 1999). Second, a very significant number of people have sought to immigrate to the EU countries in search of a better life. These migration movements have created fears in the host countries about the loss of jobs, the inability of the welfare state to accommodate the needs of the migrants, and an increase of criminality. Most importantly, however, the influx of migrants has reinforced conflict among competing collective identities. This could explain France’s xenophobia with Arab Muslim immigrants. Additional examples in the United Kingdom and other European countries illustrate that, as in the case of the U.S., the radical Islamic ideology has become popular among many young people within the Arab/Muslim communities in Europe, while their lack of integration within the national societies has contributed to the strengthening of their Arab/Muslim identity.

As a result, societal pressures have prompted the EU and its individual Members States to initiate tough immigration policies, which have resulted in what people have called “fortress Europe” (Gebrewold 2008; Bigo and Guild 2005). The threat of terrorism has exacerbated further public fears regarding immigration (Walker 2004), while the question of Turkey’s entry into the EU has also highlighted the importance of the identity, security, and migration linkage. To illustrate this point, one could cite Germany’s resistance to Turkish immigrants.

As the above examples suggest, in the political and social realms, security is related to collective identities. Groups identify themselves in two different ways. First, they may identify themselves with reference to certain qualities and characteristics they share (common origin, language, history, religion, customs, etc.). This may be called “positive identification.” Second, human collectivities may identify themselves with reference to what they are not (negative identification), or in opposition to another group (the “Other”). However, groups can also obtain an identity when other groups identify them as their “Other.” No matter how a group identifies itself or is identified by others, identity – to a considerable extent - becomes a social construction.

Because in the political and social realms, security is related to collective identities, it constitutes a social construct (Weiner 1993; Choucri 2002). As such, security obtains different meanings in different societies. An ethnically homogeneous society, for example, may place a higher value on preserving its political and cultural identity than does a heterogeneous society and may therefore regard an influx of migrants as a threat to its security.

How and why some migrant communities are perceived as threats to the identity of the receiving state is a complicated issue, involving initially how the host community defines itself. Cultures differ with respect to how they define who belongs to or can be admitted into their community. These norms govern whom one admits, what rights and privileges are given to those who are permitted to enter, and whether the host culture regards a migrant community as potential citizens. A violation of these norms is often regarded as a threat to basic values and in that sense is perceived as a threat to national security. However, there is always a possibility that host societies may display hostile attitudes toward migrant communities even in the absence of a violation of norms by the latter.

Moreover, the question of how and why some migrant communities are perceived as threats to the identity of the receiving state also involves how the migrants decide to deal with the host community (providing that the host society does not display hostile attitudes toward migrant communities in the absence of a violation of norms by the latter). Historical examples have illustrated that the more a migrant community seeks to integrate itself into the society of the host country and the more it attempts to adapt to the way of life of that society, the less threatening this migrant community is perceived to be. The less a migrant community seeks to integrate itself into the host society and the less respect it displays for the values and norms of that society, the more threatening this migrant community is perceived to be.

As a way to address the question of cultural co-existence, which have a direct impact on questions of national identity and national security, the idea and policy of multiculturalism has been advanced. However, like identity and security, multiculturalism is also a social construction. As a result, it also receives different meanings in different societies. A rather homogeneous society, for example, may be more skeptical about multiculturalism than a heterogeneous society.

The problem with multiculturalism is that it does not represent a uniform idea or policy. Specifically, multiculturalism may take three distinctive forms. First, it may represent a condition where the culture of the host society co-exist and interact with the culture(s) of the migrant communities and this co-existence and interaction is based on a mutual respect. In this case, a multicultural identity may be created that could provide the state with a considerable socio-political strength. Secondly, multiculturalism may represent a situation where the cultures of the host and migrant communities co-exist but the interaction between them is absent or minimal. In such a case, cultural fragmentation affects national identity and undermines the socio-political cohesion of the state. Thirdly, multiculturalism may represent a state of affairs where cultural tolerance on the part of the host society results in a situation where migrant communities attempt to maximize their benefits at the expense of the host country by citing "cultural intolerance." This constitutes a clear case of abuse of culture and cultural differences to obtain political and economic benefits (Stivachtis 2007).

Therefore, multiculturalism is not a *panacea*. The question of whether multiculturalism constitutes a "good" policy is context dependent. This context is created by the operation of real factors (i.e., economic conditions) but most important by a) the perceptions and actions of both the host and migrant communities; b) how they decide to relate to one another, and c) how they decide to deal with deviant behavior displayed within their own realm and toward the other group.

Migration and International Relations

Initially, approaches to the phenomenon of migration were predominantly economic (Klein 1987; Simon 1989). However, economic approaches and explanations neglect two critical political elements. The first is that population movements are often impelled, encouraged, or prevented by

governments or political forces for reasons that may have little to do with economic conditions. Second, even when economic conditions create inducements for people to immigrate, it is governments that decide whether their citizens should be allowed to leave, or whether migrants should be allowed to enter their state territories, and their decisions are frequently based on non-economic considerations. Governments wish to control the entry of people and regard their inability to do so as a threat to their sovereignty and security. Consequently, any effort to develop a framework for analyzing migration flows and their effects, must take into account the political determinants and constraints upon these flows.

Economics does, of course, matter. Even a country willing to accept immigrants when its economy is booming is more likely to alter its immigration policy in a recession. But economics does not explain the criteria countries employ to decide whether a particular group of migrants is acceptable or is regarded as threatening.

The study of migration effects is imperative to understand why states and their citizens often have an aversion to migration even when there are economic benefits. Migration flows suggest the need for an analytical security framework that focuses on state policies regarding the receiving of migrants as shaped by concerns over internal security and international stability. This framework should turn attention to the larger social, political, and economic context within which natives and migrants interact.

Migration is politically, economically, socially, and environmentally important and pervasive in many countries. Migration refers to two categories of individuals: refugees and those in search of economic opportunities. However, under certain circumstances, the distinction between refugees and non-refugee "foreigners" is blurred in the eyes of the natives of the receiving states. This happens in countries where there are already problems between the natives and non-refugee migrants. Moreover, migration can be perceived as threatening by governments of either sending or receiving states. Migrants can be a threat to either country's political stability or they may be perceived as a threat to the major societal values of the receiving country.

Apart from voluntary immigration, there are three distinct types of forced and induced immigrations (Weiner 1992, 98-100). First, governments have forced migration as a means of dealing with political dissidents and class enemies (Kulischer 1948). The cases of Ethiopia, Chile and Iran are illustrative of this fact (Zolberg et al. 1989).

Second, forced migration has also served as a means for states to achieve foreign policy objectives. Governments, for example, have used migration as a way of extending their political and economic interests, acquiring recognition, putting political pressure on neighboring countries, destabilizing them, preventing them from interfering in their internal affairs, and prodding them to provide aid or credit in return for stopping the flow of immigrants. The migrant-receiving country often understands that a stop to unwanted migration is not likely to take place unless it gives up to a tacit or explicit demand made by the sending country. In addition, to view migration flows as simply the unintended consequences of internal conflicts is to ignore the willingness of some governments to reduce or eliminate from within their own borders selected social classes or ethnic groups, and to affect the policies of their neighbors (Glazer 1985).

Third, governments may force migration as a means of achieving cultural homogeneity or asserting dominance of one ethnic community over another (Tucker et al. 1990). Moreover, contemporary population movements are linked to the rise of nationalism and the emergence of new states whose boundaries have divided linguistic, religious, and tribal communities (Weiner & Stanton-Russell 2001). The result of this division has been that minorities, fearful of their future and often faced with discrimination and violence, have often migrated to neighboring states to join other communities with whom they share the same ethnicity. Additionally, some developing or

less-developed countries expelled their ethnic minorities when the latter were economically successful and competed with a middle-class majority. For instance, in 1972 Uganda expelled its Indian population most of whom were part of the country's middle class. Furthermore, governments facing unemployment within the majority community and conflicts among ethnic groups over language and educational opportunities have often regarded the expulsion of a prosperous minority as a politically popular policy.

Yet, minorities have often been threatened by the state's antagonistic policies towards their religion, language, and culture as the state sought to impose a hegemonic ethnic or religious identity upon its citizens. This seems to be the case in Sri Lanka. Governments have made clear to economically successful minorities that others would be given preferences in employment. In Malaysia, for example, the government adopted a policy of giving preferences in employment and education to Malays over Chinese. Finally, many governments expelled their minorities or created conditions that induced them to leave, and thereby forced other countries, on humanitarian grounds or out of cultural affinity, to accept them as refugees.

Because political and societal security is a social construct with different meanings in different societies, providing a haven for those who share one's values is important in some countries, but not in others. Moreover, even in a given country, what is highly valued may not be shared by elites and counter elites. The influx of migrants regarded as radicals may be feared by a government but welcomed by the opposition. One ethnic group may welcome migrants, while another is opposed to them. The business community may be more willing than the general public to import migrant workers.

Similarly, countries differ in whether or not they regard the mistreatment of their citizens abroad as a threat that calls for state action. While some countries are prepared to take armed action in defense of their overseas citizens, others prefer not to antagonize a government that has enabled its citizens to find employment and a country that is a source of much-needed remittances.

Explanations for the response of migrant-receiving countries can be divided into two categories. The first is the host country's economic absorptive capacity. It is plausible, for example, that a country with little unemployment, a high demand for labor, and the financial resources to provide the housing and social services required by immigrants, regards migration as beneficial, while a country low on each of these dimensions regards migration as economically and socially destabilizing. The same logic applies to the volume of migration. A county faced with a large-scale influx may feel more threatened than a country experiencing a small influx of migrants.

However, research has shown that this is not always the case. According to Myron Weiner (1992, 92-94), the reluctance of states to receive refugees is only partly a concern over economic effects. The constraints are as likely to be political, resting upon a concern that an influx of people belonging to another ethnic community may generate xenophobic sentiments, conflicts between natives and refugees, and the growth of anti-migrant, right-wing parties.

Indeed, the second and most plausible explanation for the willingness of states to accept or reject migrants is ethnic affinity. For example, Chinese authorities are very skeptical about Tibetan immigration due to the ethno-religious "threat" Tibetan migrants pose to China and its cultural homogeneity. A government and its citizens are likely to be receptive to those who share the same language, religion, or race, while it might regard as threatening those with whom such an identity is not shared. But what constitutes "ethnic affinity" is - to a significant extent - a social construct that can change over time. Many Western Europeans now regard East Europeans, as fellow-Europeans, more acceptable as migrants than people from Africa. Who is, or who is not, "one of us" is historically variable. Moreover, what constitutes cultural affinity for one group in a

multi-ethnic society may represent a cultural, social, and economic threat to another. The hostile response of the African-Americans in Florida to Cuban immigrants is illustrative.

Cultural affinity or its absence clearly plays a critical role in how various communities within countries respond to migration. This brings one face to face with the need to address the question of identity and its relation to migration.

Identity and Migration

Most general studies of identity emphasize that identity implies sameness and difference at the same time (Jenkins 1996, 3). Identity is people's source of meaning and experience. As it has been stated,

“We know of no people without names, no languages or cultures in which some manner of distinctions between self and other, we and they, are not made. . . Self-knowledge — always a construction no matter how much it feels like a discovery — is never altogether separable from claims to be known in specific ways by others” (Calhoun 1994, 10).

Identity refers to the process of construction of meaning on the basis of a cultural attribute, or a related set of cultural attributes, which is given priority over other sources of meaning. For an individual, or for a group, there may be a plurality of identities. Yet, such a plurality is a source of stress and contradiction in both self-representation and social action. This is because identity must be distinguished from role-sets. Roles are defined by norms structured by the institutions and organizations of society. Their relative weight in influencing people's behavior depends upon negotiations and arrangements between individuals and these institutions and organizations. Identities are sources of meaning for the actors themselves, and by themselves, constructed through a process of individuation (Giddens 1991).

Identities come into existence only when and if social actors internalize them, and construct their meaning around this internalization (Castells 2004, 7). Although some self-definitions can also coincide with social roles, identities are stronger sources of meaning than roles because of the process of self-construction and individuation that they involve. As Manuel Castells puts it, identities organize the meaning, while roles organize the functions (Castells 2004, 7). For most social actors, meaning is organized around a primary identity (that is an identity that frames the others), which is self-sustaining across time and space (Lasch 1980).

Like security, identities are also constructed. The real issue is how, from what, by whom, and for what. The construction of identities uses among others, building materials from history and collective memory. But individuals and social groups process all these materials, and rearrange their meaning, according to social determinations and cultural projects that are rooted in their social structure, and in their space/time framework. In general terms, whomever constructs collective identity and for what largely determines the symbolic content of this identity and its meaning for those identifying with it or placing themselves outside of it. Since the social construction of identity always takes place in a context marked by power relationships, Castells proposes a distinction between three forms and origins of identity building (Castells 2004, 8):

- *Legitimizing identity* that is introduced by the dominant societal institutions to extend and rationalize their domination over social actors (Sennert 1980; Anderson 1983)
- *Resistance identity* which is generated by those actors who are in positions/conditions devalued and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination, thus building trenches of

resistance and survival on the basis of principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society (Calhoun 1994, 17).

- *Project identity* that comes into existence when social actors, on the basis of whatever cultural materials are available to them, build a new identity that redefines their position in society and, by so doing, seek the transformation of overall social structure.

Naturally, identities that start as resistance may induce projects, as well as become dominant in the institutions of society, thus becoming legitimizing identities to rationalize their domination. A very important matter is the benefits of each identity for the people who belong.

Each type of identity-building process leads to a different outcome in constituting society. *Legitimizing identity* generates a set of organizations and institutions, as well as a series of structured and organized social actors, which reproduce the identity that rationalizes the sources of structural domination. *Identity for resistance*, leads to the formation of communities (Etzioni 1993). This may be the most important type of identity-building in societies that discriminate against migrants. It constructs forms of collective resistance against otherwise unbearable oppression, usually on the basis of identities that were clearly defined by history, making it easier to vitalize the boundaries of resistance. For instance, ethnically based nationalism, as Scheff proposes, often “arises out of a sense of alienation, on the one hand, and resentment against unfair exclusion, whether political, economic or social” (Scheff 1994, 281). Castells (2004, 9) refers to this process as *the exclusion of the excluders by the excluded*. That is, the building of defensive identity in the terms of dominant institutions/ideologies, reversing the value judgment while reinforcing the boundary. In such a case, the issue arises of the reciprocal communicability between these excluded/exclusionary identities. *Project identity* produces collective social actors through which individuals reach holistic meaning in their experience (Touraine 1992). In this case, the building of identity is a project, perhaps undertaken on the basis of an oppressed identity, expanding toward the transformation of society as the reconciliation of all people living in a country, natives or migrants, as citizens of a given state.

How, and by whom, different types of identities are constructed, and with what outcomes, cannot be addressed in general, abstract terms: it is a matter of social context. Identity politics, as Zaretsky (1994, 198) argues “must be situated historically.” In Anthony Giddens’s terms, “one of the distinctive features of modernity is an increasing interconnection between the two extremes of extensionality and intentionality: globalising influences on the one hand and personal dispositions on the other” (Giddens 1991, 5). For Castells (2004, 11), the rise of the network society induces new forms of social change. This is because the network society is based on the systemic disjunction between the local and the global for most individuals and social groups. Under such new conditions, civil societies shrink and disarticulate because there is no longer continuity between the logic of power-making in the global network and the logic of association and representation in specific societies and cultures. The search for meaning takes place then in the reconstruction of defensive identities around communal principles. Most social action becomes organized in the opposition between unidentified flows and secluded identities. In the network society, project identity grows from communal resistance – resistance of a native community to outsiders/migrants, as well as resistance of migrants to the resistance against them. This is the actual meaning of the new primacy of identity politics in the network society.

The age of globalization is also the age of nationalist resurgence, expressed both in the challenge to established nation-states and in the widespread (re)construction of identity on the basis of nationality, always affirmed against the alien. As Eley and Suny (1996, 9) point out,

- “Most successful nationalisms presume some prior community of territory; language, or culture, which provide the raw material for the intellectual project of nationality. Yet, those prior

communities should not be “naturalized”, as if they had always existed in some essential way, or have simply prefigured a history yet to come. . . Culture is more often not what people share, but what they choose to fight over.”

Nationalism and nations have a life of their own, independent of statehood, albeit embedded in cultural constructs and political projects. Therefore, four major analytical points must be emphasized when discussing contemporary nationalism with regard to social theories of nationalism (Castells 2004, 32). First, contemporary nationalism may or may not be oriented toward the construction of a sovereign nation-state, and thus nations are, historically and analytically, entities independent of the state (Keating 1995). Second, nations, and nation-states, are not historically limited to the modern nation-state as constituted in Europe. In contrast, the development of nationalist movements in many areas of the world has followed a wide variety of cultural orientations and political projects (Castells 2004, 33). Third, nationalism is not necessarily an elite phenomenon although in all social movements, the leadership tends to be more educated and literate than the popular masses that mobilize around nationalist goals. However, this does not reduce the appeal and significance of nationalism to the manipulation of the masses by elites for the self-interest of these elites (Smith 1986, 125). Fourth, because contemporary nationalism is more reactive than proactive, it tends to be more cultural than political, and thus more oriented toward the defense of an already institutionalized culture than toward the construction or defense of a state. When new political institutions are created, or recreated, they are defensive trenches of identity, rather than launching platforms of political sovereignty. Thus, nationalism is constructed by social action and reaction, both by elites and by the masses, as Eric Hobsbawm (1990) argues, countering Ernest Gellner’s emphasis on “high culture” as the exclusive origin of nationalism (Gellner 1983).

Nationalism is indeed culturally, and politically, constructed, but what really matters is how, from what, by whom, and for what it is constructed. At this historical juncture, the explosion of nationalisms, some of them deconstructing multinational states, others constructing pluri-national entities, is not associated with the formation of classical, sovereign, modern states. Rather, nationalism appears to be a major force behind the constitution of quasi-states; that is, political entities of shared sovereignty, either in stepped-up federalism (as in the Canadian case) or in the “nation of nationalities,” (the Spanish case) or in international multilateralism (as in the case of the European Union).

But there is also a powerful reason for the emergence of language-based nationalism in our societies (Olshtain and Horenczyk 2000). If nationalism is, most often, a reaction against a threatened autonomous identity, then, in a world submitted to cultural homogenization by the ideology of modernization and the power of global media, language, as the direct expression of culture, becomes the trench of cultural resistance, the last bastion of self-control, the refuge of identifiable meaning. Thus, after all, nations do not seem to be “imagined communities” constructed at the service of power apparatuses. Rather, they are produced through the labors of shared history and then spoken in the images of communal languages whose first word is *we*, the second is *us*, and, sometimes, the third is *them* (Castells 2004, 56).

Ethnicity has also been a fundamental source of meaning and recognition throughout human history. It is a founding structure of social differentiation, and social recognition, as well as of discrimination, in many contemporary societies; especially those experiencing high degree of migration. It has been, and still is, the basis for uprisings in search of social justice, as for Mexican Indians in Chiapas in 1994. It is also, to a large extent, the cultural basis that induces networking and trust-based transactions in the new business world, from Chinese business networks to the ethnic “tribes” that determine success in the new global economy. Ethnicity, for Castells (2004, 57), is being specified as a source of meaning and identity, to be melted not with other ethnicities, but under broader principles of cultural self-definition, such as religion and

nation. Ethnic materials are integrated into cultural communes that are more powerful, and more broadly defined than ethnicity, such as religion or nationalism, as statements of cultural autonomy in a world of symbols. In other words, ethnicity becomes the foundation for defensive trenches, then territorialized in local communities defending their turf. Between cultural communes and self-defense territorial units, ethnic roots are twisted, divided, reprocessed, mixed, differentially stigmatized, or rewarded. It is within this context of identity politics that one needs to understand how migration becomes a security issue.

Migration as a Security Issue

Cultural differences and ethnic conflicts have gained significance and new meanings in an international environment characterized by a dissolution of traditional political and societal structures. While communications, as well as political and economic interactions increasingly cross the borders of states, nations and ethnic communities are nevertheless asserted. International migration combines these two tendencies in an exemplary way (Weiner 1993). In this context, the perceived efforts of migrants to maintain their cultural and ethnic identities are often blamed as a cause of conflict within states. What some see as a development that enriches a society's cultural character, others view it as a threat to their own culture and conception of themselves.

Since the 1960s, a number of major developments in global migration patterns have placed the phenomenon at the heart of international politics (Graham and Poku 2000, 2). First, the scale of movements has increased exponentially. Second, there has been an enormous increase in the diversity of international population movement. Third, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of global institutions shaping the level and pattern of international migration. Fourth, government involvement is increasing, not only at destination countries where attempts to limit the number and characteristics of migrants have escalated, but also in origin countries where governments have realized the various political and economic benefits involved and actively encourage immigration.

These factors have reinforced each other to change the racial, ethnic, and cultural mix of many countries and cities beyond recognition. At the same time, the increase in international migration has also given rise to paranoia and xenophobia. Migrants very often live in tenuous existence, rarely gaining the same rights as non-migrants, while their hosts are usually aloof. Blamed for a range of ills – from unemployment to crime, strained social services to lack of national unity – migrants are aware of just how easily their rights can be swept away (Heisler and Layton-Henry 1993). The plight of refugees is even worse (Robinson 1998).

One of the most important transnational aspects of international relations concerns the activities of ethnic *diasporas* and their place in the societies of the host countries (Ages 1973). In a world commonly depicted as constituted by a states system, *diasporas* stand out as one of the awkward collective identities that are neither “here” or “there” (Davies 2000, 23). *Diasporas* are often perceived as groups which resist full assimilation into their host society and which desire to maintain strong ties with their homelands. While these transnational linkages may give rise to suspicions or fears about their loyalties to their host, for *diaspora* members such fears serve to further engender group cohesion and a sense of difference within the host society. For many Western countries, the end of the Cold War meant not only the disappearance of a powerful external threat to their security, but also the loss of an important source of cohesion between the diverse groups which constitute them (Davies 2000, 30). In these states, this transformation opened a space for allowing marginalized identities to be freely reasserted. In this context

diasporas became the centers of increased ethnonationalism and were consequently seen as a threat to the national security of the host countries (Cohen 1998; Davies 2000, 33-44).

Over the past twenty or so years, most of the core postulates and assumptions about migration have been called into question, even though new images of migration do not seem to have penetrated the minds of decision-makers, law-makers and administrators (Kleinschmidt 2006, 8). Migration has important consequences for the formulation and execution of migration policy (Skeldon 1998). If migration is recognized as a normal, not a deviant behavior, migration policies that impose constraints and hardships upon migrants are violations of human rights. Far from conveying security, migration policies provoke insecurity both for migrants and residents. Migrants' insecurity becomes more severe with the increasing rigidity of border control, while residents' insecurity grows as the state fails to effectively implement border control at feasible costs. Moreover, under certain conditions, migrant control by the state's domestic security apparatus increases migrants' insecurity, while the inability of the police forces to provide such control increases the insecurity of the citizens of the receiving state. Migration has therefore sparked the elevation of new security issues onto the domestic and international security agenda (Miller 1998, 15-27). As a consequence, the conventional, narrow definition of security has become insufficient.

From 1994, human security has featured with increasing prominence on the agenda of international organizations, particularly on the agenda of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). It has been understood that withholding basic human rights and deprivation of essential life conditions are likely to result in the increase of the number of migrants, especially refugees and asylum seekers. Moreover, the extended concept of security expands the meaning of security to concerns about the human individual as the primary recipient of security and therefore amplifies the range of potential security providers (Poku et al. 2000, 9-22).

The debate about human security has boosted the significance of migration as an issue of international relations and deepened the understanding that migration policies can no longer be left to be decided exclusively by sovereign states. As a result, the regulation of international migration became central to the policies of several international organizations, while regional integration is seen as an effective way in dealing with issues related to migration (Kleinschmidt 2006, 61-102). By contrast, the widening concept of security has received much less attention due to the way in which national institutions, international organizations, and the transnational civil society groups have so far been concerned with migration as they are more concerned with refugees, asylum seekers and their security interests (Kleinschmidt 2006, 103-119).

In the wake of September 11th and the success of political parties and forces which build their electoral platforms on the issue of international migration, the whole subject of migration has assumed an ever greater significance within the public debate. Increasingly, doubts are being expressed concerning the scope for integration of culturally different groups and the practicability of multi-cultural concepts of society. Moreover, migrants of a particular religion, (for example, Muslims), country (i.e Mexicans), continent (Africans), or region (Kosovo) are discussed as a potential threat to social integration but most important, as constituting a threat to the national security of the receiving states.

Host societies imagine migrants to be groups with special preferential social relationships and with a collective identity. Migrants are also perceived as groups of people who are culturally different. In reaction, migrants perceive themselves as members of some social category with unequal status and this becomes a very particular and important element of their collective identity (Sackmann 2003, 2).

The maintenance of group boundaries is not the only function or effect of collective identities. There are understandings of collective identity, which focus on difference, distinction, or otherness. Collective identity, in this view, is primarily produced by the construction of boundaries, by the maintenance of distinctions between “in-group” and “out-group”, by the exclusion of the “other”, or by focusing on the differences between members and non-members. Groups create their self-image by drawing contrasts to their social environments, to images of the “other”. In so doing, they often create fears of exclusion and consequently fears of survival. It is within this frame that migration via identity politics becomes a security issue.

The Concept of Security

In both academic and policy-making communities, prevailing views of security have been shaped by distinct conceptions of what it means to be secure. In fact, what constitutes a security problem has been a subject of academic discussion for many decades (Nye and Lynn-Jones 1988). All these perspectives proceed from different premises, establish different priorities, and generate different types of predictions. Moreover, what scholars and policy-makers consider to be national security issues is not fixed but varies over time. During the first half of the twentieth century and particularly during the Cold War, security acquired a narrow military definition. However, events and revolutionary changes that have marked world politics in recent years offered International Relations scholars an opportunity for reflection. As a result, scholars have made some adjustments in their research. For example, various forms of realist theorizing have rediscovered nationalism and ethnicity, while having looked into new areas to apply realist theory. Nevertheless, realist analysis (especially in its neo-realist form) continues to neglect domestic politics and transnational relations. Therefore, these adjustments in the core paradigm informing national security studies have left many scholars and students of international relations unimpressed.

The end of the Cold War has brought new national security issues into the forefront among which the question of identity, and how it is affected by migration flows, occupies a central place. Neorealism remains silent on the issue of identity for two reasons. First, it stresses the ecological dynamics that self-selection and functional imperatives have for states; and second, it seeks to distance itself from traditional realism, which did pay attention to human nature and to issues of national identity (Katzenstein 1996, 23). Unlike what neorealists believe, state interests, as well as political and cultural identities, do not exist to be “discovered” by self-interested rational actors. Instead, they are constructed through a process of social interaction. For example, Ernest Gellner (1983) stresses the importance of the instrumental logic of nationalism, while Benedict Anderson (1983) emphasizes that national identities are socially constructed.

Already during the 1970s and 1980s there were voices arguing about the need to broaden the concept of security. This suggestion divided American realist scholars and political practitioners on the one hand and reformers staffing the Brandt, Palme, and Brundland Commissions and European peace researchers on the other. In early 1980s, Richard Ullman (1983) made a general case for broadening the concept of security.

With the end of the Cold War and the break up of the Soviet Union, the political and intellectual climate significantly changed in favor of new, non-military based definitions of security. The end of the Cold War brought a fundamental change to the notion of security. Eventually it became clear that international security, state security, and individual security are interdependent and that non-military issues are of equal importance both for domestic and international stability.

In distinguishing between traditional, narrow, and military definitions and recent, broad conceptions of security studies, scholars articulated very different views about how to define the

concept of security (Sorenson 1990; Buzan 1991a; Walt 1991; Kolodziej 1992; Romm 1993; Lipschutz 1995). The narrow definition of security tends to focus on material capabilities and the use and control of military force by states. According to this view, states can be threatened only by the activities of other states. National security is, consequently, seen in purely military terms. In contrast, the broader definition of security distinguishes among military, political, economic, societal, and environmental security threats and examines how these threats affect not only states but also groups and individuals, as well as other non-state actors. The wider security perspective has been the result of the growing dissatisfaction with the narrowing of the field of security studies imposed by the military logic of the Cold War. It constitutes a response to the argument that concerns about military security have traditionally masked underlying issues of political, economic, and societal threats. Although military threats remain important for security thinking, the wideners claim that other types of threats have risen in importance and that political, economic, societal, and environmental issues can be fundamental causes of intra- and inter-state conflict. Moreover, they argue that higher density of human activity and interaction has increased both interdependence and awareness of events worldwide (Buzan 1991b). Thus the wideners' perspective comprises efforts aimed at creating a more expansive and multidimensional framework for thinking about security (Tuchman Mathews 1989).

To comprehend the relationship between migration, identity and security, one needs to adopt a sociological perspective on the politics of national security that focuses how security interests are defined by actors who respond to cultural factors. Definitions of identity that distinguish between "self" and "other" imply definitions of threat and interest that have strong effects on national security policies. For many states, identity has become a subject of considerable political controversy. How these controversies are resolved are of great consequence both for domestic and international security (Guild and Selm 2005). The most comprehensive framework for thinking about security has been developed by Barry Buzan (1991a); and his colleagues (Waever et al. 1993; Buzan et al. 1998) and it is on this framework that the present paper is based.

Migration and the Politics of Security

According to the comprehensive security perspective, any effort to define security is subject to two parameters: the differentiation of states and the *securitization* of political issues.

In contrast to the Neorealist claim that states are like units (Waltz 1979, 96), the comprehensive security perspective advocates that states differ, among other things, in terms of size, culture, power, ideology, etc., and that their character is a major factor in shaping international security (Buzan 1991a, 67). According to Buzan (1991b, 47), the major differentiation between states can be seen in terms of their socio-political cohesion, which is of central importance to their national security. Thus, he has introduced the distinction between "strong" and "weak" states as an analytical tool to show that strong states are usually faced with different security threats than the weak ones.

Because of their diversity, the nature of the national security problem differs substantially from state to state. The security problem differs even among the weak/strong states themselves. This implies the impossibility of devising a universal definition of national security. Although the concept of security can be mapped in a general sense, it can only be given specific substance in relation to concrete cases. This, in turn, implies the impossibility and the inadvisability of defining migration flows as a security problem with general application. Since the national security problem differs substantially from state to state, whether migrants constitute or not a security problem depends on which state one refers to. The problem of defining security in relation to migration becomes more acute due the *securitization* of migration issues (Waever 1995; Buzan et. al 1998).

Securitization means that an issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures. According to the *securitization* process, something is designated as a security issue because it can be argued that it is more important than other subjects. By framing an issue as a special kind of politics or as above politics, *securitization* represents an extreme version of *politicization* which means that an issue is part of public policy (Buzan et. al. 1998, 23). Security, thus, becomes a self-referential practice, because it is in this practice that a subject becomes a security issue, not necessarily because a real existential threat exists but because the issue is presented as such a threat. This implies three things. First, some national societies may consider the existence of migrants in the territories of their states as a threat to their security, while others may not. Secondly, migrants may not pose any real existential threat to the receiving states, but particular social groups within those states may be successful in framing them as a “security problem”. Thirdly, migrant communities may indeed pose a threat to the host society but interested actors have failed to present this issue as an existential threat requiring emergency measures.

To understand security and how it is seen being affected by migration movements, one should focus on three distinctive though inter-related levels of analysis: the individual, the state, and the international system.

The comprehensive security perspective provides a link between the individual, state, and system levels by arguing that a state can be threatened equally from within and outside. External security is identified as the ability of the state to defend itself from external coercion, attack, or invasion. Speaking of external security, emphasis is placed on the military dimension of security. Within the state, security is usually defined in terms of the capacity of a government to protect itself from domestic disorder or revolt. However, in the presence of a considerable number of migrants bearing their own distinctive ethnic and cultural identity, security may be defined in terms of the capacity of the government to protect the political and national identity of the state.

A state can be threatened from below (by individualistic or organizational pressures on the government) and from above (by oppressive or threatening governmental initiative, policy or action). Thus security refers not only to the security of the state and its government, but also to the security of the individuals and groups (natives or migrants) who compose it. Looking within the state, emphasis is shifted to the non-military aspects of security.

Migrants may threaten or may be perceived as threatening the external and internal security of both the sending and receiving states. To understand, how this might happen, one needs to focus on the systemic level of analysis.

According to the comprehensive security perspective, the international system constitutes the main political context for regional and international security. Any effort to comprehend how migrants may affect or they may be perceived as affecting security at the regional and international level should, therefore, proceed with an examination of how the anarchic structure of the international system and the forces of interdependence operating within it and which tie the system together are related to migration flows.

In this context, migration flows will most certainly push states to co-operate with one another to deal with the problem, but the actions of migrants may also provide the fertile ground for conflict between states. Due to geographic proximity, such a conflict is more likely to take place within a particular region, thereby increasing the possibilities for regional instability. To prevent such instability, great powers and international institutions, preoccupied with conflict management and containment, would feel the need to intervene. Thus, what may start as a problem between two states, caused by the activities of migrants, may be transformed to a regional and international

security issue. This is due to the operation of the forces of interdependence. The latter points to issues where either the scale of problems transcends the abilities of individual states to make effective policy by themselves, or where linkages are so strong that independent action by any state cannot avoid engaging the concerns of the others.

The complex dialectic that results from the dividing tendencies of international anarchy with the binding ones of interdependence sets the political conditions in which all meanings of regional and international security have to be constructed (Buzan 1991a, 146). In terms of the relationship between migration and security, international anarchy and interdependence impose two major conditions on the concept of security (Buzan 1991b, 42):

1. States are the principal referent objects of security. This means that to understand how migration flows affect regional and international security, one should first comprehend how these flows affect the security of the receiving and sending states.
2. Due to the increasing interdependence, the dynamics of national security are highly relational and interdependent between states. Thus, the national securities of the sending and receiving states can only be fully understood when considered in relation to each other.

The above conditions point to the need of examining the “state” as an object of security analysis. The first step to this direction is to focus on the domestic characteristics of states.

According to Buzan’s framework, strength as a state neither depends on, nor correlates with, power. Weak or strong states refer to the degree of socio-political cohesion; weak and strong powers refer to the traditional distinction among states in respect of their military and economic capabilities. Weak states are characterized by the existence of societies not well suited to the demands of complex economic, social, and political relations. Among other things, they usually lack a clear and observed hierarchy of political authority, while experiencing high levels of political violence and major political conflicts over their organizational ideology. They are, therefore, obliged to maintain extensive internal security establishments. Moreover, they often lack coherent national identity, or are faced with the presence of contending national identities within them. Weak states are mainly concerned with domestically generated threats to the security of the government. These threats can take many forms including military coups, guerilla movements, terrorist activities, secessionist movements, mass uprisings and political factionalism. The case of Nepal is very illustrative of this point. This is because weak states have not achieved a domestic political and societal consensus of sufficient strength to eliminate the large-scale use of force as a major and continuing element in their domestic political life.

Migrants may pose significant problems to weak states by further weakening the already feeble forms of their economic, social and political relations. Under certain conditions, their presence in a country and their activities may increase the possibilities for domestic political violence as well as undermine the organizational ideology of those countries. This may lead the host states to expand their internal security arrangements. Finally, their ethnicity may exacerbate problems in states lacking coherent national identity or in those experiencing contending national identities within them.

Whether states are weak or strong in terms of their degree of socio-political cohesion is without doubt crucial to their own security. Yet, due to the operation of the logics of anarchy and interdependence, their degree of socio-political cohesion is also crucial to the security of the regions within which they are located. This is because weak states’ domestic insecurity frequently spills over to disrupt the security of neighboring states. Refugees and guerillas often cross borders, and unstable élites seek to bolster their position by cultivating foreign threats. Due to their vulnerabilities, weak states offer other states and organizations temptations to intervene. Great powers will find it difficult not to be drawn into this turbulence and involve in competitive

external intervention, especially if they are competing with each other for spheres of influence, whether ideological, political, military or economic. Yet, weak states may serve as targets to aggressive neighbors, while among themselves constraints on the use of force are relatively low, and many territorial and political issues are usually remain to be resolved. Since migration flows may exacerbate the problems facing weak states and since weak states are problematic for regional security, it becomes evident that by destabilizing weak states, migrants may also undermine regional security.

Migration movements can easier create security problems to weak rather to strong receiving states. Migrants may also threaten (or may be perceived as threatening) the external and internal security of their home and receiving states. To understand how they may do so (or may be perceived of doing so), one needs to focus on the dimensions of security.

Security Sectors, Security Politics, and Migration “Threats”

There are five sectors to which the concept of security applies: military, political, economic, societal and environmental (Buzan 1991a; Buzan et al. 1998). These sectors are so interdependent that changes in one sector, whether positive or negative, affect other sectors. This means that if and when migrants affect (or perceived as affecting) one security sector by the same token they affect other security sectors.

Military Security

In the military sector, the referent object of security is mainly the state that is threatened from outside. Trying to achieve a special status (independence, autonomy, democracy) for the country from which they come or to unify it with the receiving state, migrants may threaten the military security of states in, at least, three ways. The first is when they use the territory of the receiving state for initiating military activities against their home country. The latter may hold the receiving state responsible for those activities no matter if it does not support politically such activities. Second, refugees may convince the receiving state to undertake direct actions against their home country. Lastly, the receiving state may have an interest in challenging the regime of the migrants' home country and uses them as a means to this end.

Political Security

Political threats undermine the organizational stability of the state by threatening its national identity and organizing ideology as well as the institutions that express them. In the political sector a state may be threatened both internally and externally. Internal threats may arise as a result of governmental actions that pose threats and constraints to individuals or groups. Resistance to the government, efforts to change its policies or overthrow it, or movements aimed at autonomy or independence all threaten state stability and enhance state insecurity.

Externally, a state can be threatened by the ideology of another state, such as nationalism, fundamentalism, liberal democracy, communism, etc. Because contradictions in ideologies are basic, states of one persuasion may well feel threatened by the ideas represented by others. In this sense, when migrants and receiving states share similar ideas, the host countries may pose political threats to the ideology of the migrants' home country. On the other hand, when migrants are holders of an ideology different than that of the receiving state, then they may be perceived as a threat to the ideology of that state.

An external political threat may easily be transformed to an internal one. For instance, threats to national identity may involve attempts to heighten the separate ethno-cultural identities of groups

within a target-state. Thus, if a host country does not share a common ideology with migrants, it may become a subject to external threats coming either from the migrants' home country or any other rival state. Either of them may try to heighten the existence of competing ideologies within the receiving state for achieving its foreign policy ends.

The political security of states can be also threatened when migrants are opposed to the regime of their home country and are involved in anti-regime activities in the host country. In response to migrants' activities, their home country may be forced to plant intelligence operations abroad to monitor the activities of migrants and its embassies may provide encouragement to its supporters within the ethnic *diaspora*. This implies that a conflict may develop between migrants and their country's regime; this time within the territory of the receiving states. Thus, struggles that could otherwise take place within the home country are internationalized. Additionally, ethnic *diasporas* may become hostile to the host countries and its activities may undermine the host states' internal stability. Finally, migrants may threaten the political security of their home country by providing financial and military assistance to rebel groups or by marshalling international public opinion through publicity campaigns aimed at the international community and at particular international institutions. These activities and interests may be in sharp contrast to those of the receiving states.

Economic Security

Economic threats can be internal or external, intentional or unintentional. Whatever their type, economic threats may result in material loss and strain on various institutions of the state, while they may undermine the health and longevity of the population. Thus they are concerned with the sustainability of acceptable levels of welfare and state power. Migrants may threaten the economic security of the receiving states by imposing limits to their financial capability. They are usually so numerous and so poor that they create a substantial economic burden by straining housing, education, sanitation, transportation and communication facilities, while at the same time increasing consumption (Heisler and Leyton-Henry 1993). To deal with this economic burden, the receiving states may have to increase taxes paid by their own citizens. National societies, or specific social groups within them, may react to an influx of migrants first, because of the economic costs the latter impose on the receiving state; second, because of the migrants' purported social behavior, such as welfare dependency which affects the host country's individual tax payers; and third, because migrants may displace local people in employment because they are prepared to work for lower wages. Created by economic considerations, social hostility may undermine the socio-political cohesion of states thereby affecting their security.

Environmental Security

In the environmental sector, the range of possible referent objects of security is large. The basic concerns, however, are how human beings and the rest of biosphere are related. Many cases have shown that following their displacement, refugees can be seen as an environmental threat by the receiving state. Hostility towards them can be generated, when they consume significant amounts of water and other natural resources and produce waste. Immigrants can also be considered as a "threat" to the environmental security of a country to the extent they are seen as indifferent to the host country's environmental standards and needs or to the degree they share beliefs regarding environmental friendliness.

Societal Security

In the societal sector, the referent object of security is collective identities that can function independent of the state, such as religions and nations. In relations between states, significant external threats on the societal level are often part of a larger package of military and political

threats. Therefore, societal threats can be difficult to disentangle from political or military ones. Even the interplay of ideas and communication may produce politically significant societal and cultural threats, as illustrated by the reaction of Western states to Islamic fundamentalism. Language, religion, and cultural tradition all play their part in the idea of state, and may need to be “defended or protected against cultural imports” (Olshtain and Horenczyk 2000).

As in the political sector, threats in the societal sector may arise from the internal or external environment of the state, while an internal threat may be transformed into an external one and *vice versa*. If societal security is about the sustainability of traditional patterns of language, culture, and religious and ethnic identity, then threats to these values come much more frequently from within the states than outside them. The state-nation building process often aims at suppressing, or at least homogenizing, sub-state social identities. As a result, internal societal threats may precipitate conflict between states if the latter wish to protect groups of people with whom they have close affinities and who find themselves in a state that suppresses their rights.

In the long term, the most obvious effect of migration is the creation of ethnic minorities in host countries. Admitting migrants has long-lasting social effects on receiving states. It may turn relatively homogeneous societies into multi-ethnic and multicultural ones by the introduction of ethnically and culturally different people. Migrants often raise societal concerns because they are seen as potentially threatening to undermine the popularity and strength of the nation-state. They are also perceived as challenging traditional notions about membership of a state, the meaning of nationality and citizenship, and the rights and duties of citizens towards their state and *vice versa* (Weiner 1992, 110). The fact that very few states fit the idealized picture of the homogeneous nation-state, and the most states are cultural and social products of earlier movements of people, fails to register on the popular consciousness.

It is widely established in people's minds that the existence of migrants has a substantial impact on social stability and economic prosperity, which are inter-related. By becoming citizens of the receiving state, migrants create a cultural, linguistic, religious and possibly a racially distinct minority within the host country thereby altering the character of its society. Thus migration may be seen as threatening communal identity and culture by directly altering the ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic components of the population of the receiving state. Migrants may be seen as a threat to the cultural norms and value systems of the receiving states. If migrants violate these norms and values, the citizens of the receiving states may see this violation as a threat to national security. In defending itself against migrants, national societies may emphasize their differentiation from them. As a result, questions of status and race may be difficult to avoid.

More often than not, migration occurs alongside with the clash of rival cultural identities. In combination, migration threats and the clash of cultures contribute to a societal conflict between domestic and sending societies (Guild and Selm 2005; Widgen 1990). As it has already be shown, this conflict may easily feed into a massive restructuring of relations between the hosting and home states which may, in turn, affect regional and international security.

In addition, the governments of the receiving states are concerned with the migrants' purported social behavior, such as criminality and “black labor,” that may generate local resentment, which, in turn, may lead to xenophobic popular sentiments and to the rise of anti-migrant political parties that could threaten the government on power. In France, for instance, the National Front has utilized anti-migrant slogans to increase its electoral power. Thus, countries receiving migrants may need to maintain social stability and cohesion in the face of the multi-culturalism produced by migration. It is possible, however, that under certain circumstances, governments may pursue anti-migration policies in anticipation of public reactions.

Societies are also seen to have a limited threshold of toleration for migration if their flow begins to undermine the social and political cohesion of the receiving country. The threshold is affected by economic, social, and cultural circumstances in the receiving society as well as by the character of migrants themselves. As many cases have revealed, anti-immigrant feeling and xenophobia also increase in times of recession and high unemployment. Toleration levels are likely to be lower in countries without tradition of migration and higher in those that have. Migrants who are similar to the host population are also easier to accommodate and tolerate than if they are racially and culturally distinct.

As it was mentioned previously, how and why migrants are perceived as cultural threats is a complicated issue, involving initially how the host community defines itself. Cultures differ with respect to how they define who belongs to or can be admitted into their community. These norms govern whom one admits and what rights and privileges are given to those who are permitted to enter. Thus the most plausible explanation for the willingness of states to accept or reject migrants is ethnic, cultural and religious identity and affinity.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that identity, migration, and security are inextricably linked that that this linkage occupies a central place in contemporary political debates both within individual states, as well as international organizations dealing with migration and refugee issues. However, one of the most significant issues one may face dealing with the politics of migration, its effects both on the migrants and the societies of the host states, and the immigration policies of various states is the misunderstanding of or even ignorance about the contents of the concept of identity and the political implications of the process of *securitization*. For example, Sinisa Malesevic argues (2006, 35) that the term “identity”, and its derivatives, cover too much ground to be analytically useful, while its quasi-scientific use through popular appeal has a potential for devastating political outcomes. In daily practice, identity has become no more than a common name for different and distinct processes that people need to explain. Wrapping all these diverse forms of action, events, and actors under a single expression can only generate more misunderstandings.

The concept of “collective identity” is a complex one and that is why it has been greatly misunderstood by the general public although it has served as an effective instrument in the hands of radical anti-immigrant political forces. For example, it has been shown that collective identities do not necessarily imply some kind of cultural homogeneity and coherence and that there are many elements of a “group culture” or “national culture” which are not necessarily part of collective identities (Peters 2003, 17). Elements become part of collective identity only insofar as they are regarded as such by the members, and insofar as they are seen as expressing a specific cultural character of the group or as constituting a specific cultural heritage or tradition. Moreover, Bernhard Peters has argued that the strength of collective identity is not dependent on the degree of cultural difference or dissimilarity between the group and its social environment (Peters 2003, 18). Likewise, group solidarity is not dependent on cultural sameness. Neither cultural assimilation of migrant groups or cultural convergence necessarily result in a weakening of collective identities. Among other things, Peters’s work shows the significant weaknesses in people’s efforts to create a “we” in opposition to “them”.

The expansion of threats to “security” to the level of secure social identities can also be used as an effective instrument against political opposition, and the availability of the state security apparatus provides an effective instrument with which to deal with such “threats”. If security is tied to a concern with identity, and as a result reduced entirely to subjective judgment, then any xenophobic vision of what is to be secured and from what seems politically plausible. Purported threats to societal security in the name of ethnic and cultural purity can render either fellow citizens or migrants “threats” to security, sometimes by virtue of their simple existence. It is

precisely in the name of the concrete security of certain people – especially migrants – that Bill McSweeney suggests that these issues be kept off the security agenda (McSweeney 1999). Similarly, at the level of contestation over values, the transformation of these issues into “security” concerns allows one side to present the other as a “threat” rather than just as an element of broader societal challenges. But as Michael Williams argue, an engagement with the politics of security (one could add the politics of identity) means that difficult questions regarding the relationship of the analysis of security and the politics of security must be necessarily confronted by the analyst (Williams 1997, 15).

Finally, the examination of the identity-migration-security nexus reveals that only an honest and continuous dialogue between hosting and migrant communities, a mutual understanding between them, and their determination to prevent or deal effectively with any extremist behavior on the part of their members would prevent migrants’ identity from becoming a security threat to the host state and society.

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