

# Changes to migration and the border control today



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Nowadays, the control over immigration has become very important political issue, which represents a real threat for social security and stability and also fosters growth of criminality and expansion of illegal labour market. Hard period of the world processes and its developing over permanent pressure escalating political, economic, social and other problems, activization of terroristic activity leads to destabilization of the situation in many developing and developed states, thus spanning regions and continents. The majority of receiving countries strongly concerned with vulnerability of their borders, streams of illegal migrants. Consequently, these states elaborate new measures to secure their border. The scenario of migration without borders envisaged a high level of freedom for the movement of people within the international borders, thus challenging this tendency and offers a new vision of this issue, according to which states do not have to attempt to restrain migration flows, but rather to help them and to use opportunities which they create. This essay, examines the recent changes in border controls, estimates their costs, advantages, efficiency and finally will conclude with the discussion of security as a paradox.

The development of contemporary migration control is characterized by several tendencies. The governments began to more rely on new technologies and elaborate innovative measures which allow them to identify migrants without documents once they have entered their territory, while receiving countries are trying to encourage sending and transit states to cooperate in struggling against irregular migration. The security matters play paramount role in these processes. Financial and humanitarian expenses

related to ensuring security raise the question whether it is possible to set up the real control over the people and control the migration flows.

The borders between West states and less reach states have become increasingly fortified. Besides, sophisticated tools are being used to control them. The most obvious example is toughening of the border control between The US and Mexico, along which, walls and high steel fencing have been established. Many patrol agents patrolling borders equipped with technologically advanced equipment, including video surveillance, body heat, high intensity lighting and motion detecting. (Nevins, 2002). The similar tendency can be observed in Europe. The toughest control by means of technological tools is being occurred in Gibraltar between Spain and Morocco. In order to control migration processes, new actors, in particular, air carriers which are responsible to check the right of passengers to travel to the state of destination (Guiraudon and Joppke, 2001).

Due to the failures of external control, the governments create measures of internal control, which allows tracing illegal migrants after their entry to the country. Controls on the workplace are often envisaged and sometimes is being implemented, but do not give desirable outcomes. It irritates employers, and also interfaced with high economic and political costs, and in order to implement such control in wide scale, huge efforts are necessary. Additionally, there is another option to establish control over access of illegal migrants to social services. The status of immigrants is frequently being used for restraining access to ensuring of material aid; however this policy meets resistance, because it is doubtful in terms of protection human rights, and creates more isolation for migrants and contradicts to inclusive nature of <https://assignbuster.com/changes-to-migration-and-the-border-control-today/>

the welfare system (Cohen et al., 2002). Having been detected, sometimes illegal migrants come across with jail or extraditions. Although, the roots of such measures is in the right of the state to control entry and residing of people, who are not their citizen or natives, it is important that historically such measures had been accepted in response to such specific circumstances of exceptional character such as military conflicts and wars. Nowadays, such measures have become a common practice (Schuster, 2004).

Another strategy to control migration bases on the international cooperation. Sending states are facing pressure for preventing departure of illegal migrants. While the transit countries calls for toughening the control on borders. The countries like Mexico and Morocco became buffer zones to restrain migration from Latin American countries or sub-Saharan Africa (Biersteker and Andreas, 2003). Sometimes, sending states are provided with development aid on the condition that they will co-operate in the control over migrations or on their reaccepting expelled migrants. Thus migration becomes an issue of bilateral relations between receiving and sending states.

In the last decade, security issues reinforced the apparent need to control borders, as vulnerability of borders fosters terroristic activity. For instance, In North-America, the source of concern became even the long-neglected border between The US and Canada (Biersteker and Andreas, 2003). On both sides of Atlantic Ocean, these concerns have prompted incentives to biometric technologies (Thomas, 2005). Although, security concern has

reinforced aspiration to toughening border control, it is necessary to keep in mind that this issue was already a big problem before.

Therefore, migration process itself cannot explain the last tendencies by its toughening. The biggest consequence of changes in control over migrations is the numbers of deaths on the way to receiving state. Illegal migration has become a very dangerous deal: by estimations, on the US-Mexican border, annually at least one migrant dies. Basic reasons of these deaths are dehydration, hypothermia, drowning or sunstroke (Cornelius, 2001; Martin, 2003). Similar tendencies may notice in Europe as well. By Eschbach's estimations, in a period between 1993 and 2003 while trying to reach Europe, at least 920 migrants died (Eschbach et al., 1999), while by NGO's estimations, in a period between 1992-2003 more than 4000 migrants died (Recakewicz and Clochard, 2004). Additionally, according to 2002 statement, given to the General Secretary of the UN, in a period since 1997-2000 while trying to reach Europe, predominantly, in a moment of crossing the Straits of Gibraltar, about 3000 migrants died (Human Rights Advocates International, 2002). The tragic consequences of illegal migration are not confined by the Western countries: the same data mentions casualties within Australian border, also between Guatemala and Mexico and in Sahara. Moreover, it is necessary to keep in mind that these figures are likely underestimated casualties, as nobody knows how many dead bodies have not been found yet.

The costs of toughening border control measures are not only by human casualties, but also by financial costs. According to IOM report, annually, the

25 richest states spend \$25-30 billions a year on the enforcement of immigration laws (Martin, 2003).

These costs stem not only from border control, but also from obtaining residence permission, visas, the prosecution and removal of illegal migrants, the processing of asylum seekers' and resettlement of refugees.

In order to better understand the real amount of such costs it is necessary to compare them with sums which are given on development. According to the World Bank's 2004 report " World development indicators" (World Bank, 2004), states spend approximately \$60 billion on aid for development, and still \$30-50 billion is needed to put poor states on the way of development, which could allow them to achieve the Millennium Development goals.

### **Migration control**

In the last years, the question of migration control has caused huge debates, because the states sometimes unable to control borders and even cannot control migration flows. Survivability of illegal migration is an explicit example of that even the most sophisticated forms of border control does not allow preventing from entry people a country. In fact, some illegal migrants are detained while crossing the border, and some are dispatched back after having crossed the border. However, the most motivated and lucky ones sometimes can get around obstacles by means of taking extra risks; by new ways of crossing borders or by relying on wide proliferated service of professional people-smugglers. Seemingly, there seems to be a consensus among experts regarding toughening control over migration does not lead to achieving goals (Cornelius et al., 2004).

There are a several explanations given to explain why states unable to control migration. At the present time, migration is structurally embedded in the economy and social life of many states. Once receiving and sending sides become dependant on migration, it is almost impossible to stop them. In conditions of globalization, state faces the dilemma that borders should remain open for business and international tourism (Andreas and Snyder, 2004). Furthermore, migration movements are self-sustaining processes (Castles, 2004). Migration networks, which encompass entire world and stimulating new migrations, have connected the states. This shows that migration is easy to start but hard to stop. Ultimately, lobby groups can show an internal pressure on governments, demanding to solve migrations due to labour market reasons.

As shows comparison between West states and oil-exporting countries from the Middle East, control over immigration is very complex in liberal-democracies, whose characteristic lines are domination of market relations and respect for basic human rights norms (Holyfield, 1992). The market always aspires for expansion, always seeks for new people to produce service and goods, and also new consumers, which rapidly makes immigration in convenient method of satisfaction of these market impulses. Once market relations challenge state logic of control and management, this challenge creates tensions in relations between states and markets (Entzinger et al., 2004; Harris, 2002).

Respect for human rights means that even illegal migrants should enjoy at least minimal degree of legal protection. According to philosophy of human rights, people use protection on the basis that they are personhood, rather

than on the basis of their national identity or citizenship, and implementation of these rights sometimes take place on supranational level, which restrains government's autonomy (Jacobson, 1996; Sassen, 1996; Soysal, 1994). This means that NGOs', human rights groups and civil society can contest governments' actions in courts. In other words, the control is controlled, and states are restrained in their actions. Although, state prerogative to set up control over its own borders has no doubts, nevertheless, the control has to be restrained. In fact, full control has never been a norm. Some may argue that open borders were a reality in the 19th century. Possibly, the interpretation of free policy by unlimited state interference of migration is exaggeration. Meanwhile, it is apparent that states had gradually been acquiring ability to control people's movement - the exclusive right which were divided before with other public actors, such as private enterprises or churches (Torpey, 2000). From this point of view, the contemporary states are able to control migration better than ever before, and this seeming loss of control is based on the myth of perfect sovereignty which has never existed before (Joppke, 1998). Additionally, officially proclaimed policy may differ than real intentions. For instance, magnanimous indifference to illegal migration may correspond to the interests of state or employers which aspire to receive access to illegal workforce (Freeman, 1994).

The strategies that states use can also not always be differ by coherency, as economic concerns may conflict with security concerns.

Generally speaking, it is necessary to emphasize that border control may have rather a symbolical character rather than giving real outcomes. Indeed, borders always have played a psychological role in formation national



identity and national authority (Anderson, 1996), thus governments has to show citizens that authority controls gates. This may lead to infinite repeating process: Border control creates problems such as trespassing and smuggling which consequently call for more control (Andreas, 2000).

In this regard, border controls is a policy which creates impression, but gives very modest outcomes, and enable governments to use rhetorical arguments in favor of pro-control or even anti-immigration, thereby keeping an access to foreign labor force. In EU countries, for instance, states which are strongly exposed to illegal migration like Italy or Spain feel the need to demonstrate to their citizens as well as to other members of EU that they are addressing this issue.

Although, social-political context raises issue of border control in developed states, but difficulties in controlling immigration is a problem which not only Western states come across with. International experience also has shown that proliferation of illegal migration is quite broad phenomenon. According to the UN's report, approximate amount of illegal migrants for certain countries fluctuates largely. For instance, by average estimations there are about four or five million illegal migrants in the US, it is about 1, 5% from the total population of the country. In Italy - 0, 5-1 million people, in Greece - 300 000 or 3% of the whole population (Borjas, 2009) Supposedly, in the North and West Europe amount of illegal migrants constitutes 50% of all number of legal migrants. Besides, the least number of illegal migrants are in Scandinavian countries, Canada and Australia. Meanwhile, it is fair to say as far as some researchers are concerned, the estimation number of illegal migrants is the same as guessing on a coffee thick. This represents an

explicit contrast with situation that existed during 70th of the last century, when migration had been causing concern, and illustrates the globalization of the problem, and when concern of migration emerges not only in Europe and North America, but also in Latin America, Asia Pacific and Africa.

Along with movement on lawful bases, migration without corresponding permission so-called illegal migration has received more distribution. Quite frequently, uncontrollability and non-controlling of such process negatively affects on the condition of internal market, also leads to mass offensive of migrants rights, creates preconditions for social intensity in places of a congestion of illegal migrants, and negatively influence on criminal situation in country. Especially, a big concern is an illegal labor migration, which might outgrow to a huge problem.

### **Migration control in future**

Irrespective of whether or not to successfully control migration, it is apparent that contemporary practices raises for some serious questions. The first question is concerned about the coherence of migration policies. Should states stick to their ambition of absolute controlling migration, and make it despite facts, which prove unattainability of this purpose? The risk is that the gap between claim and reality can make policy internally inconsistent, especially in perceiving society, and also fosters belief that government is unwilling or unable to control people flows which creates anti-immigration feelings. In order to act in accordance with public concerns over migration issues, successful and coherent policies are needed.

The second issue relates to sustainability of migration policy as decreasing the amount of migrants is unlikely; they have to envisage long-term responses over migration challenges. The contemporary policy which has not been based on the clear representation about management of migrations seemingly lags behind from time requirements and reacts passively and restrictively on changes in migration flows. However, “ building walls is absolutely useless job, which means inadequacy of this system” (Nett, 1971: 224), and it is necessary to envisage viable alternatives for the future challenges.

Finally, Catherine Withol (2003) argues that humanitarian costs of border control raise a question of whether such control measures are compatible with the basic values of international community? In which extent, tough border control can coexist with harmonious functioning of democracy? Liberal values and the principles of human rights cannot stop its activity on borders. On the contrary, they must induce states to corresponding behavior toward aliens arriving at their gates (Cole, 2000). The way a society solve the destiny of foreigners reflects the values upon which this society is based, and in terms of the human rights and dignity the price is that developed states are willing to pay to control their borders (Schuster, 2004; Brochmann and Hammer, 1999). In other words, development of migration control towards toughening, can eventually cause reaction and create threat to liberal principles and freedoms which are fundamental in democratic societies.

In this context, migrations without borders suggest morally justifiable and coherent method of long-term planning migration policy. This is a complex

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idea, realization of which will be possible only in future. But taking into account the current difficulties which migration control has, the conception of movement could be a source to stimulate elaboration of new solutions to existing problems.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, all states in the world attempts to control migration, but facing with huge difficulties in elaboration a policy, which would correspond to their requirements. Unlikely that the amount of migrants will be reduced in the immediate future, when it will become obvious that even the most expensive and sophisticated control measures, cannot actually stop migrants. Perhaps, the main victims of inadequate approach to migration will be migrants who may come across with more risks in a moment of crossing borders. The necessity to think about non-controversial migration policy occurs.

Assumption that the scenario of migration without border could give answers on contemporary problems may look naïve as well as to suppose that comparatively limited schemes which practicing in contemporary system in migration control would give long-term answers on existing problems.

Migration without border scenario has some advantages: it is ethnically justified being useful addition to human rights on immigration to which symmetrical right on freedom of movements is added.

In globalized world people's movement is not anomaly. Migration is a process, rooted in social-economical structures and generic to nomadic life of migrants as well as to their transnational identity. There are sufficient amount of examples proving that a classical migration model that is

settlement on permanent residence does not encompass all contemporary movements of people. Therefore, the policy should take into account new migration features.

At the same time, social and economical consequences of implementation migration without borders scenario are very complex. It is necessary to analyze strength as well as weaknesses of migration without border scenario as it is complex and deprived from dangers and risks measures, which will put an end for all unfairness'. But this scenario is not a utopia. It is more inspiring view of migration future and golden source of ideas which enable to elaborate more fair migration policy.