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MIGRATIONS - QUESTIONS OF IDENTITY

Abstract: The Balkan is a territory where people moved intensively in various directions, weather massively, in groups or as individuals. The population movement can provide us with various data concerning different cultural spheres. An especially provocative issue regarding migrations is the one of identity of the migrants. In this sense, the question of migration includes a continuous struggle for identity. There are a lot of "black points" in a geopolitical sense, created almost always as a result of past or recent migrations. In this sense, the Balkan could be identified as a turbulent region, where the problem of identity of the migrants is still a complex question.

Key words: migrations and migrants, identity, Balkan.

The Balkan is a space where there are intensive movements of people, mass movements, movements in a group or individual ones, in military circumstances, in times of economic crisis, but also during relatively calm periods. In this moment as well one can follow intensive seasonal and permanent migrations. The movement and relocation of people can be a source of data in different spheres of folk culture, which is evident when one bears in mind the numerous published monographs and minor scientific articles. Regarding the migrations, one question is especially provocative - the identity of migrations. The identity of the ones that arrive at certain space, no matter if they are staying there during a certain season or are just passing by. In that sense, the question of migrations grows into a question of permanent struggle for identity at the Balkans and wider. This fight is not just theoretical, but also real, with many sufferings and victims. The recent military events in the critical points that we can mark as migration black points show the same thing. Those "black points" are numerous at this geopolitical space. Almost as a rule those a result of former or recent migrations. In that sense, the Balkan has a status of an "earthquake" region, and the question of identity of migrations remains complex.

The questions of identity on the level of a small and a bigger ethnic community and the status of the individual in that mess become a fight for space, state territory and cultural domination. One can follow at the Balkans, starting from the middle ages up to the present, that in a form of a crossword someone is always proving that has more identity compared to the others, that everyone recognizes someone, and does not recognize someone else, and that himself suffers from the same phenomena. In that sense, the posed questions regarding the identity seem like ones that can not be solved, since each individual solved problem immediately opens a line of new questions whose solutions can be only more or less successful constructions.

If we deal with the problem of double or triple identity, we can achieve different results. This problem is present when most of the Balkan nations are in question, however, it is expressed more strongly when some of those nations are in question. In that sense we can examine how is the Macedonian identifying in contemporary circumstances related to the migrations, in the frames of the current state and outside of it, when as a result of the migrations from the villages to the towns someone who is a Mijak or a Brsjak settles in Skopje. First of all, they stress upon the fact that they are Macedonians, but at the same time they speak proudly of their local origin. Mijak and Brsjak are still used ethnological terms with certain meaning. When a Shop from the Macedonian region Shopluk will settle in another area, he will not mention that at all, since this ethnological term (name) is not enjoying high respect even in its local space, that is, due to the fact that it has lost its meaning it turned into a name with pejorative connotation. The Shop is identifying himself as Macedonian, also according to the local and administrative centers in his native area, for example: Krivopalanchanec, Kratovchanec, Pijanchanec, Berovchanec etc (Svetieva 1992 : 9-18). Although endogamy as an ethnic border does not function any more, when it comes to the city, certain groups of immigrants are still showing solidarity related to their origin from a certain ethnic group or ethnographic region. They relate with others that have the same origin, sometimes marry each other, help each other when it comes to employment, getting different privileges, they gather at mutual new festivities in certain restaurants in the city, etc. Also many of them retain relations with their village, attend the village festivity, which is an

opportunity to visit the graves of their forebears, so that one can say that on the level of functions of the village as a ritual community new functions of social character appear.

If the small heterogeneous ethnic structure of "Mijaks, Brsjaks, Shops" goes to Serbia for a short stay, they will eventually identify as Macedonians so that they could be equal when it comes to the identification according national identity. If it happens that they move there or to another Balkan space, they will try to adapt to the new environment. Even if they achieve that formally, inside them they will still be bothered by the identification question. Should the identification related to the local ethnological name of the group and the people be saved for domestic use, and to gradually adopt another one for an external use? Even when there were guaranteed rights of the people in former Yugoslavia, and the language was one of the three recognized languages, this process could be followed in live when the second generation of Macedonians is in question - immigrants from the Vardar and the Aegean part of Macedonia in Belgrade and other places in Serbia, 1963/73.¹

The process of integration in the new environment, the acceptance of double identity and the loss of identity, is happening faster if the three faces of the model of the chosen structure are settled permanently somewhere in Europe or in some other place. In the hypothetical situation they are have not migrated due to business purposes, and they are also not such intellectuals to feel as "citizens of the world". These are emigrants in the classical sense, they are unemployed, aiming to find a job even at the price of their own life.

The ones who have immigrated think of themselves as a generation that has committed a sacrifice, but they however make all attempts so that their children do not differ from the local population. This problem was a subject of ethnological research regarding the "modality of migrations", in the context of examining the ethnogenesis (Vlahovic 1984 : XVIII). Different relations give impulse to another, different development of the situation. If it is a matter of individual settlements, the process of assimilation goes very fast. If it is a matter of small group of immigrants assimilating into a bigger group of local population, there is a possibility that this process could be slower. Sometimes a compact group of settlers can keep its ethnic characteristics for a long time, as a form of resistance towards the environment that it finds different than itself. There are also contradictory situations. Thus, the group that has been detached from its native nucleus and has settled into another ethnic ambience, can keep its ethnic characteristics in a better way than the mass of people that stayed in the native space. Sometimes just one ethnic parameter - for example the language (dialect) could animate the group for a longer time, so that it persists as an ethnic community in the new place of settlement. This process could be followed in live on the example of the settlers from Macedonia in Turkey, during our research into the ethnology and folklore of the immigrants from Macedonia into Turkey.² There are also other similar investigations on the presence (or absence) of the Macedonian language when it comes to the emigrants from the second and the third generation. The Macedonians that have accepted the Muslim religion in the period 1955/56 are identified by the ethnographic region of their origin: Debrani, Tikveshani, Veleshani, Skopjani etc. Very often the local identification can be seen by the new family name that they have chosen in Turkey: Kuprulu, Uskupli, Shar, Reka, Debreli etc.³ At the same time they identify themselves as Turks. According to their own explanation, they decided to move, to leave their property so that they become Turks, since they are Muslims. Here we face the problem of identifying the ethnic with the religious, that in this case is a dominant factor regarding the real ethnic belonging of the group. They say regretengly that they don't speak the Turkish language very well, they are sorry for their "memleket", but they point proudly to the children that do not differ in any way with the local Turks. The first and basic goal of the emigrants is to get a new citizenship. The solution of this question solves all other problems. The contemporary situation when it comes to the identity of Macedonians does not show qualitative changes concerning the data from the 19. or the

1 During my stay in Belgrade and in other places in Serbia in the period 1963/73, I had an opportunity to meet and to "discover" Macedonians that have moved during different period, from the beginning to the middle of the 20th century.

2 Project of the Institute of Folklore "Marko Cepenkov" from Skopje and the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore of Ancara, 1982-84.

3 The settlers had to change their old family name and to chose a new one that could be formed resembling Turkish language. The data are a result of my own research in Istanbul, Izmir, Manica, Akisar. Most of the data have been collected from Mr. Dzevad Dzuloski from Debar (1997).

beginning of the 20. century, although there are differences when it comes to group migration of one village or region, the migrants group in one place when settling in the new homes. They can communicate with each other in their own language and that could extend the expiring date of their primary identification related to their local origin. This data can be interesting, but in general they do not differ much from similar situation which included or include either members of other nations and ethnic communities. One essential question is posed - why the Macedonian tries to forget that he/she is Macedonian when he/she emigrates? Why he is behaving in a "bezjak" way as Marijana Gushic would say (Gusic 1967 : 8-9). It is indisputable that something is wrong with his status on the Balkans as a burden of the past till the present days.

The data on the seasonal and permanent migrations of the Macedonians at the Balkan can be followed through documents from the Turkish period (Stojanovski 1989). In the frames of the changeable borders of the Turkish Empire they, trying to find a job, moved in all directions, depending on the craft that they were practicing. The migrations during the 19th and the 20th century show that the Macedonians have moved in large numbers towards North and East. The reports and the archive data show that these spaces were especially attractive since the two South-Slav nations, the Serbs and the Bulgarians succeeded in liberating themselves from the Turks and they have realized the suppressed wishes of the Macedonians. The data in the documents, of the reports and the published materials from the archives in Serbia, show that they have been registered under: Turks⁴, Arbanas⁵, Bulgarian⁶, Shopi⁷, Debarlii⁸, Cincari⁹, Gogi¹⁰, Serbian (South-Serbian)¹¹, Chokalii¹² etc. They

4 Because they came from a territory within the political borders of Turkey

5 Because they came from the Debar region, known also by the name of "Arnautluk".

6 In the work of Irecek we find the terms "Slav Bulgarians" or just "Bulgarians" when it comes to the migrants from Macedonia to Serbia [see: Konstantin Jurecek, *Istorija Srbije*, t.1, (Beograd, 1922), t.2, (Beograd, 1923)]

7 When it comes to the migrants from the Macedonian Shopluk, the ethno name "Shopi" is used. In some cases the ethno name is changing according to the ethnographic and philological meaning and refers to the builders and stone carvers in general.

8 The term refers to all Debrans and Rekans that identified themselves as "Debrans" according to the town of Debar, administrative and cultura center of the region, known since medieval times.

9 Since at the same time in Serbia Vlahs (Cincars) from Macedonia settled, they were dealing with the same or related crafts as Macedonians. Thus, very often they have worked together, in mutual groups. This is why there was no big difference made between them, that is, this ethno name presents a term with pejorative meaning.

10 According to the Albanian word "gog" - builder, since the Macedonians, as well as Arvanitovlahs (Farsherioti) dealt with masonry (see: Dzurdzica Petrovic, *Cincari u Republici Srbiji, Polozaj manjina u Saveznoj Republici Jugoslaviji*, SANU, Beograd 1996, 780).

11 According to the political climate in Serbia regarding the ethnic origin of Macedonians, from the beginning of the 20th century onwards.

12 The name "Chokalii" can be interpreted in many ways. According to some of them, the milkmen and the ones who were producing the drink boza from Galichnik and other places from Western Macedonia have received this name, as mobile craftsmen - traders at the streets of Belgrade who sold milk or boza in cups called "chokanchinja" - compare to *çokal* in Turkish - clay or glass cup for drinking water, alcohol etc. (Data received from Branko Lepcheski, 80 years of age, born in Galichnik and from Galaba Palikrusheva Ph.D. - ethnologist). According to Dzurdzica Petrovic, ethnologist from Belgrade, later on the term has extended to all migrants from Macedonia, as a symbol of low social status in the town. According to other information, memories of the ones who carry this name, they did not perceive this term as one with pejorative meaning and they don't think that until the 40's of the 20th century it pointed towards the low social status of the migrants. On the contrary, according to the ones coming from Galichnik and other migrants from Western Macedonia, this name was a synonym of a hardworking man who comes from South Serbia (Vranje, Leskovac etc.), and from Macedonia (Data from Todor Cherepnalkovski, 50 years of age, originating from Galichnik and Vasko Lepcheski, 50 years of age, originating from Galishnik). People from Galichnik and other Mijaks have a few legends regarding the positive connotations of this name where their origin relates to the words "*çok*" - Turkish (a lot, much) and *akil* - Turkish (clever). One of the legends speak of a Turkish pasha who went to Serbia during the rebellions of the 19th century. He had a translator who came from Macedonia and spoke a few Balkan languages. The translator felt that the ones who provided accommodation want to poison the pasha, so he advised him to eat only boiled eggs. When the pasha understood

are usually registered only by name or the name of the leader of the group, while the family names were modified to resemble Serbian ones adding "ic" at the end, as for example "Dimitrija Markovic dundzerin from Ohrid" (Graga za istorijata na makedonskiot narod T.1, kn. 1 1979) or "Nastas Stefanovic from Ohrid". The situation was identical of the ones who migrated into Bulgaria. Here they have without any second thoughts used the name Bulgarians for the ones who have arrived from the Vardar and the Aegean part of Macedonia. Also one finds the name Arbanasi. Thus, for example, according to Jordanov, the village Arbanasi has got its name according to the migrants from Western Macedonia, from the Arnautluk part - as the popular name of the wider space starting from Debar region to Mat and Chermenika (Jaranov 1932 : 63 - 118).

The migrants penetrated the new Balkan states that had a prepared strategy after the liberation from the Turks concerning the Balkan space and the nations that still lived under the Turkish authority. The migrants have never had a strategy for themselves. They did not have a choice, since their migrations were never decided on the diplomatic round table, meaning that their will did not matter much. When they moved they did that because they had big problems. Apart of those negative points, there were many others.

The migrants that left Macedonia and went to other continents, present a particularly interesting problem regarding the relation migration-identity. In that sense one could follow a new element appearing in the frames of the first, second and the third generation. The need for ethnic identification starts to get a new meaning, as a kind of "ethnic exotics", which is fashionable in contemporary circumstances. Although most of them do not speak the language and have never seen Macedonia, they try to learn something more about the history, culture and the folklore of the country of their forebears. Searching for their identity, they compete with other groups of migrants from the Balkans, since the inherited rivalry continues even at the new life space. The neo-romanticism of the generations that follow the first migrants' one (Kalicanin 1997) is especially interesting for research, when it comes to the specific features of the native country of their forebears. In that sense the fight for Balkan identity on different terrain and in different circumstances continues. Again the old questions are being posed, who owns and who does not own identity, thesis are being set out and fights are fought for proving or negating them.

In this short article one can not examine all aspects of the problem of migrations and identity. In this phase of drafting the problem we can conclude that migrations, apart from other problems, include the problem of changing of the identity of the migrations, primarily as a result of the migration village-town, where the local identity related to the ethnic name is lost.

The bilingual nature of certain space presents a problem too, since it shows that numerous communities that are in fact more or less mixed ethnic groups, live sharing one space. This fact of life contains an impulse for attaining a double, even triple identity. The migrants from this regions are more prepared for changing their identity in the new settlements. Groups and individuals belonging to nations that have not created their own state during relatively long historical periods or due to different reasons have done that later than their neighbors, are showing the same preparedness. The religious affiliation as a factor of change of identity is a problem in itself. This parameters seem sufficient for opening the problem of attitude towards the identity of Macedonians and other Balkan nations, if one bares in mind the reality that shows that identity is a dynamic category.

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what it is all about, he said "çok-akil" to him. Apart from these interpretations, there is one where the meaning of the word is related to the upper parts of the folk dress of the migrants (dzoka - Persian, upper male and female folk costume made of "klashna", that is "çuka", çuha (choha), Turkish word for old clothes in general (see: Abdulah Shkaqic, Turcizmi u srpskohrvatskom jeziku, Sarajevo 1985, s.v. dzöka).

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