

## **Anna Krasteva**

Centre for european refugees, migration and ethnic studies  
at the New Bulgarian University, Sofia University Lille 3, France  
anna.krasteva@gmail.com

# **Mobile Balkans: Temporality, Types, Trends**

The objective of the article is to scrutinize the Balkan migration phenomenon, highlighting the alloy between continuity and discontinuity in the explanation of migrations; the former expressed in the trends, the latter – in breakthroughs, ruptures, changes. Four periods are articulated and characterized through the major trends. The typology of Balkan migrations identifies ten types, classified in three larger categories. The article distinguishes and compares the national migration models and draws a panoramic picture of the major trends during the last quarter of a century.

### *Key words:*

Southeastern Europe,  
forced migration,  
ethnic migration,  
labor migration,  
return, economic  
crisi, refugee crisis

There is hardly another region of the world where the current situation of migrations is still considerably influenced by the past history as in the Balkans. Migrations are a fundamental part of the history of the Balkans, accompanied by turbulent times... (Bonifazi and Mamolo 2004: 519).

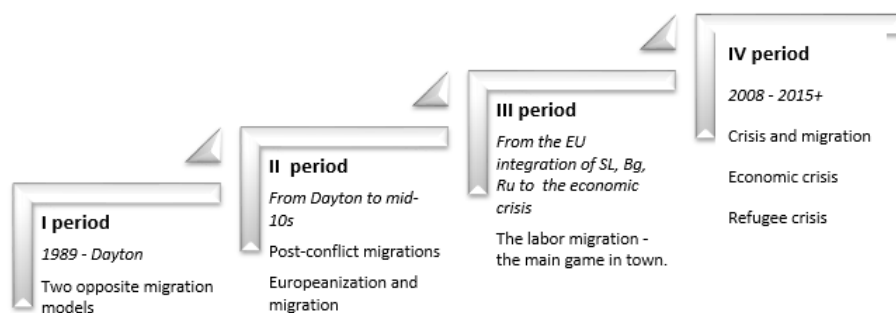
This quote is notable in two aspects: on the one hand, it describes the typical migration outlook of continuity and *longue duree*, while on the other, it presents it as a unique specifically to the Balkan region. The theory of migration systems and several non-economic theories have strongly conceptualised the influence of a state's past and interstate relations on contemporary migrations flows. It is quite curious as to why what is long-known in theory as a typical causality is seen as unique. The answers lie in the constructions of the Balkans as radical otherness, though their argumentation goes beyond the purpose of the present study. The highlight of the present study is on the understanding of the alloy between continuity and discontinuity in the explanation of migrations; the former expressed in the trends, the latter – in breakthroughs, ruptures, changes.

## The long (re)discovery of labour migration

The migration champion of Europe – the Balkans suddenly gained this reputation in the beginning of the 90ties. The above period is characterized by rather contradictory trends in the Eastern and Western sub regions. I am going to analyze this unique dynamic and the diversity by a *periodization* of the major stages in the development of the migration situation and a *typology* of the main flows and the key *trends*.

I'll distinguish *four periods* after the fall of Berlin wall.

### Periodization (1990 – 2015+)



First period from 1989 to Dayton. Two opposite migration models

This period covers a highly dynamic historic situation: the wars in former Yugoslavia, the beginning of the democratic transition in Bulgaria and Romania. It is characterised by 4 trends.

*The first* is the sad primacy of the Balkans, which become the migration champion of Europe, creating the largest flows of forced migrations in post-war Europe (Laszko, von Koppenfels and Bartel 2002, Krasteva et al 2007), a serious furnace of security risks. Ten million of the 80-million population entered the migration flows (Edwards-Baldwin 2005).

*The second* is the imbalance between the different forms of migration. While in Europe and the world work migrations are dominant, in the West Balkans of the early 90s the pendulum is pointing in the polar opposite direction – the refugees, internally displaced persons, ethnic migrations and traffick have taken central stage. This is the period when the Eastern Balkans are still producing refugees.

*The third* is the brisk separation of the Balkans in two opposing models - the literal “flight” of the Western and Eastern Balkans towards two opposing migration poles. While the migration profiles of the Western and Eastern Balkans were opposing even before this period, these differences intensify in the early 90s and form two polar clusters. The Eastern Balkans are undergoing a transition from

*politization to economization* of migration; the Western – just the opposite, from *economization to politization*.

*The forth trend* is predominantly related to somewhat good news. After the communist closeness the Eastern Balkans<sup>1</sup> also become an overproducer of migration, but one that is predominantly work and education. This forth trend is not so much traumatic, but prospective.

*Second period from the Dayton Agreement of 1995 to the mid-first decade of the XXI century. Post-conflict migrations .Europeanization and migration.*

This period starts with an end and ends with a beginning. It starts with the end of the wars in former Yugoslavia, marked by the Dayton Agreement, and ends with the European debut of the first Balkan members of the EU – Slovenia (2004); Romania (2007) and Bulgaria (2007).

It is characterised by two trends:

- Transition from forced to post-conflict migration flows in the Western Balkans
- First steps towards Europeanization of the migration profile of the Eastern Balkans.

The policy of voluntary return of the forcefully displaced gain absolute priority.

If the migration panorama in former Yugoslavia should heal the wounds of conflicts, the refugee flow in Romania and Bulgaria gains a European outlook: it does not originate from neighbouring countries, but from the far-away ones – the classic sources of global refugee flows. Afganistan, Irak, Somalia – those are the main sources of those looking for asylum in Bulgaria and Romania. Those are the main producers of refugees also on a European and global scale – every forth refugee in the world is Afgan. Rather paraxodically, the Europeanization of the migration profile of the Eastern Balkans starts precisely with the refugee flows. Several distinctions need to be made. In all else, the migration profile of Bulgaria and Romania remains Balkan, not European: the emigration strongly dominates against immigration; immigration itself holds low values – both in absolute numbers, as well as in percentage of the population; both countries are still a strong source of human trafficking to the difference of Western countries, who are the final destination.

The second distinction is in regard to the profile of refugees in the Eastern and Western Balkans, which differs significantly. In the countries of former Yugoslavia it is characterized with internally displaced persons and refugees from neighbouring countries. In other words, it has a post-conflict outlook that is entirely de-

---

<sup>1</sup> The case of Albania is a mix of elements of migration models of Western and Eastern Balkans; it will be analyzed in 'migration profiles'.

fined by the recently ended wars in the region. For the Western Balkans the source of refugee flows is internal, for the Eastern – external.

Another specificity of the period is that immigration starts receiving political and economic visibility. This is a period of gradual rehabilitation of the labor migration. It is no longer one form amongst a multitude of others, but one that holds a central place in the migration landscape as well as migration politics.

*The third period from mid-first decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century (2004) till the start of the economic crisis (2008-9). Labor migration – the main game in town*

The European integration is already a reality or a foreseeable horizon. The biggest achievement of this period is the transformation of work and occupation as the main source of both emigration and immigration. It is only in this period that the Balkans begin approaching migration ‘normalcy’<sup>2</sup>. Forced and ethnic<sup>3</sup> migrations are in the past, the citizens take on to look for jobs, for more decent pay, for better education, for new professional perspectives. South Eastern Europe has gone a long way into rehabilitating labor migration.

The second visible result is overcoming the opposing migration profiles of the Western and Eastern Balkans. The economization of migration starts gradually to erase the differences characterising the early 90s period and we observe a larger convergence of the types of migration flows and trends.

The third change, which has already started in the previous periods, is the transformation of migration into a powerful symbolic capital and resource. To the lack of reforms, poor governance, new inequalities, the citizens respond in three ways – migration, migration, migration. Migration becomes the radical critique of the inefficient elites. If in the first period the elites in the Western Balkans use forced migrations against its citizens, from then on until now the citizens in both Western and Eastern Balkans are re-appropriating migration as a resource to escape local elites and to realise professional, educational, family or existential projects.

EU integration has direct effect on the migration flows and has its qualitative and quantitative dimensions. The first is related to the access granted to the citizens of the new member states to a new migration category – ‘*the free movement of people*’. The second is related to the increase of emigration. This phenomenon represents such a tangle of myths, media speculations, realities, and political discourses, that in order to untangle we would need a separate article. Here I will mention two equally significant facts.

The first is the increase of flows from the new member-states: from 0.3 million in 2001, the number of Romanians reached 1.7 million in 2008, the respective figures for Bulgarians are 0.1 and 0.3 million. The EU enlargements of 2004 and 2007 had a different impact on migration flows: in 2001 there were twice as many citizens of EU-10 in the EU than Romanians and Bulgarians; in 2008, the sit-

---

<sup>2</sup> “Migration to day is for work”<sup>2</sup>(International Labor Organization 2010 a).

<sup>3</sup> The Roma migration remains the big exception.

uation reversed both in absolute and relative terms (Vassileva 2009: 6). Balkan citizens are more eager to consume the right of free movement. A great public visibility gains the topic of Balkan communities in the EU: Romanians are the largest immigrant group in two of the largest immigrant countries in Europe – Spain and Italy<sup>4</sup>, Albanians in Greece, Serbians- in Austria (Vasileva 2009).

The mobility of the new member states has such an impressive political visibility – in the sending as much as in the receiving countries - that the images and political messages begin to strongly dominate against the realities. The mobility of the new member states is not an exception but a confirmation of the right to high mobility that the “old ones” enjoyed: 75% of the foreigners in the EU-27 live in Germany, Spain, UK, France and Italy; at the same time, citizens of these countries are among the most numerous EU foreigners living in another member state (Vassileva 2009: 1).

*The forth period begins with the economic crisis and continues till today. It is characterized with the interference of two crises – the economic crisis and the refugee crisis.*

Two distinct types of crisis mark the current migration period: the first is the economic crisis of 2008-9 and its influence on the migration dynamic; the second is the crisis of Syrian refugees after 2012, which continues even today with growing strength.

The *economic crisis* impacts deeply migration flows (Papademetriou and Terrazas 2009) - this statement is accepted consensually, but scholars diverge in the interpretation of the impact. The emergence of a new migration order summarizes the first interpretation. It is substantiated by two arguments: the scope and range of the economic crises are unprecedented; its impact on immigration is direct and crucial and leads to the emergence of a “new migration order”. The second interpretation stresses that *the crisis is global*, but *the strategies* for dealing with it are *national*. In addition, the more all-embracing the crisis becomes, the more the cooperation decreases and the national protective mechanisms flourish (Koser 2009: 2). The third interpretation introduces a radical criticism. It un-economizes the crisis and stresses that the economic crisis should not cover up another, much bigger and much deeper crisis – that of the *increasing social inequalities* (Hoerder 2009). This vision shifts the accent from unemployment to inequalities, from the economic to the social. The crisis as opportunity is the central point of the fourth interpretation (Barbulescu 2009). A publication of the International Labor Organization with the telling title of *Don't waste the crisis: critical perspective for a new economic model* calls for debate so that the end of the crisis is not just return to business as usual, but the grounds for a new economic and social order (Pons-Vignon 2010)

*Crisis and return.* It was expected that the crisis would give rise to large flows of returnees to the Balkan states due to the unemployment in the Western countries. Returns, of course, there are, and increasingly so, yet far from the ex-

---

<sup>4</sup>As well as Hungary.

pected numbers. The reason for the short-sightedness of these predictions is the reductionist economic understanding of migration, reducing it to a mere response to the necessities of the labour market. Yet migration is a far more complex phenomenon. Amongst the elements in relation to the given example we can find: the unemployment benefits in many receiving countries are far higher than the salaries in the home states; many migrants are already well integrated and would suffer a shock in coming back; the children go to school and the return would sever their educational integration.

*Crisis and migrational balance.* If there is an area in which the crisis is vividly and unanimously manifested, it is in relation to the migration balance between emigration and immigration. For countries such as Bulgaria the imbalance was starting to decrease with numbers of immigrants approaching numbers of emigrants. Yet the crisis opened the scissors again between the out-flows and the in-flows. For two reasons. The crisis reduces the already not very strong appeal of Balkan states as a destination and thus reduces the number of the willing to immigrate in the region. The crisis reduces even further the opportunities for work and decent remuneration and the migration remains the main option for escape route.

*The refugee crises*<sup>5</sup> after 2013 is born from two opposing reasons: the war in Syria and the large refugee flow on the one hand, and the membership of Bulgaria in the EU, which makes the country one of the first European stops after Turkey.

#### *Applications for asylum in Bulgaria for the period 2010 - 2015*

| Year       | Number of applications |
|------------|------------------------|
| 2010       | 1025                   |
| 2011       | 890                    |
| 2012       | 1387                   |
| 2013       | 7144                   |
| 2014       | 11081                  |
| 30.06.2015 | 7348                   |

Source: State Agency for Refugees, Bulgaria

Other reasons explain the perception of the refugee flow as a shock: 1/the sudden increase – almost 7 times in 2013 and then 50% more in the following 2014. Just in the first six months of the current 2015 the number of refugees (7 348) is already more than it was in 2013 - 7 144; 2/the utter unpreparedness of the Bulgarian authorities and institutions to deal with the refugee flow.

---

<sup>5</sup> The size and the impact of the refugee crisis in numerous Balkan countries can't be covered by the present article.

\*\*\*

It is difficult to decide the figure that would be able to synthesize the migration dynamic in the Balkans in the last quarter of a century. *The circle* represents the continuity between the refugee crisis, which marks the beginning of the circle and the new refugee crisis, which stands at the end of the analysed period. Both refugee crises are born in wars and conflicts though the source is different – internal for the Western Balkans two decades ago, external to the Balkans today. *The arrow* introduces the more optimistic image of the Balkan migration – the transition from forced and ethnic migrations to economic ones and the possibilities for free movement of people.

## Typology of Balkan Migrations

The great diversity of migration flows on the Balkans I would divide into three categories. The first two engroup the two poles of the labor and non-labor migrations. I put in a separate third category the return, as it touches on both first categories – in the post-conflict Western Balkans the return follows mostly forced migration or displacement, while in the Eastern Balkans – it is most often a natural end or another step in the labor and educational migration.

### I. Non-labor

1. Forced
2. Ethnic
3. Trafficking
4. Refugees
5. Retirement

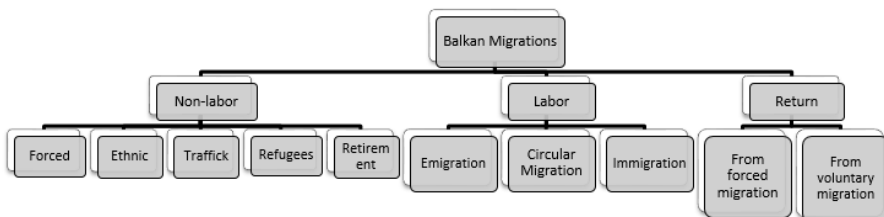
### II. Labor

1. Emigration
2. Circular migration, including the free movement of people
3. Immigration

### III. Return

1. From forced migration or displacement
2. From voluntary migration

### *Typology of Balkan Migrations*



Each typology is a risky endeavour in that it aims to capture in crystallised forms the dynamic, flexible and fluid form of migration. The current typology zooms in on the migration flows in the last quarter of a century. Exactly for this reason it looks ‘reversed’ in comparison to the global picture. If in the same period in the world and the EU labor migrations prevail and even certain asylum demands are considered as veiled form of work migration, in the 90s in the Balkans we see an increase in the forms of non-labour migration.

We see that the category of *non-labor migration* is vastly heterogeneous. The pole of voluntarism and life in comfort encompasses some of the most positive forms of migration – migration of free time and retirement migration. The most characteristic groups are the Germans and Austrians in Croatia (Bosic, 2007), and British in Bulgaria (Krasteva, 2008). The opposite and negative pole is overpopulated – around it are concentrated the forced and the ethnic migrations, the refugees, as well as human trafficking.

Out of the four types of migration which Martin Edwards-Baldwin (2005) uses to characterize the Balkan migrations in the first half of the 90ties, three are non-labor: *forced*, *ethnic*, and *trafficking*. The largest group of forced migrations are the 2.6mln from the 4.3mln population of Bosna and Herzegovina, who were internally displaced or refugees (1992-1995) – this is the largest population loss of the decade (Bonifazi and Mamolo 2004: 523). 300 – 350 000 Serbians leave Croatia in the direction of Serbia and Bosna and Hertzegovina (1991-1995). In 1999, 770 000 Kosovars are forced to flee their homes; their return later in the same year leads to exodus of 230 000 Serbs and Roma to Serbia and Montenegro (Edwards-Baldwin 2005).

If forced migrations put a traumatic mark on the Western Balkans, the Eastern Balkans produce *ethnic* migrations: Bulgaria expels 360 000 members of the Turkish minority<sup>6</sup> (Krasteva 2007, 2008), numerous members of the minorities in Romania leave the country in the first years after the transition: 105 000 Germans, 37 000<sup>7</sup> Hungarians, 3 000 Jews (Edwards-Baldwin 2005). The utter complexity of the ethnic and forced migrations of the Balkans in the 90s is summarized by Miriana Morokvasic:

What Hannah Arendt calls “the belt of mixed populations” in Central and Eastern Europe” un-mixes as the ‘ethnic surplus’ is expelled or leaves ‘voluntarily’ to join the majority in a new state or territorial unit (Morokvasic 2003:2)

The exodus and forced displacements give non-work migrations on the Balkans its outlook in the early 90s; later that decade the focus shifts to another equally negative form – trafficking. The Eastern European trafficking (Krasteva et al 2007b, Laczko 2002) can be summarised in the following specificities:

---

<sup>6</sup> In the summer of 1989 г.

<sup>7</sup> 60 000 according to Bonifazi and Mamolo 2004.



- The first is a sad record – CEE, as well as former soviet countries establish themselves as the regions with fastest growth in this type of crime.
- The second is a direct consequence of the first – Eastern European trafficking is gaining central place in this highly competitive market in Western Europe, taking over positions from trafficked victims from Latin America, Asia and Africa.
- The third is a diversification of the typology of the countries in relation to trafficking:
  - Most Balkan countries are a source of trafficking with Romania and Albania, closely followed by Bulgaria holding the leading places for trafficking victims per capita;
  - All countries take part in the transit of trafficking;
  - A more particular tendency is the establishment of some countries as a destination. In this category fall Bosna and Hertzegovina and Kosovo – quite paradoxically for a region strong in export of trafficking.

Non-labor migrations are articulated in numerous forms, yet their combined numbers are significantly smaller than those of labor migrations. Those are excellent news for a region which has just recently transitioned from conflict-related to peaceful forms of migration.

The circular migration has a solid tradition in the Balkans - *gurbet* is a cross-border concept (Hristov 2012). The emigration and the circular migration are also amongst the most solid sources of work migration in the Balkans: till the 90s this role was taken by Yugoslavia and Turkey. After the democratic transition all countries take part in the outward flows with Albania as the biggest exporter (Bonifazi and Mamolo 2004). The top five destinations for migrations from the SEE<sup>8</sup> are Germany, Italy, Greece, Switzerland and Austria (Gallup 2009).

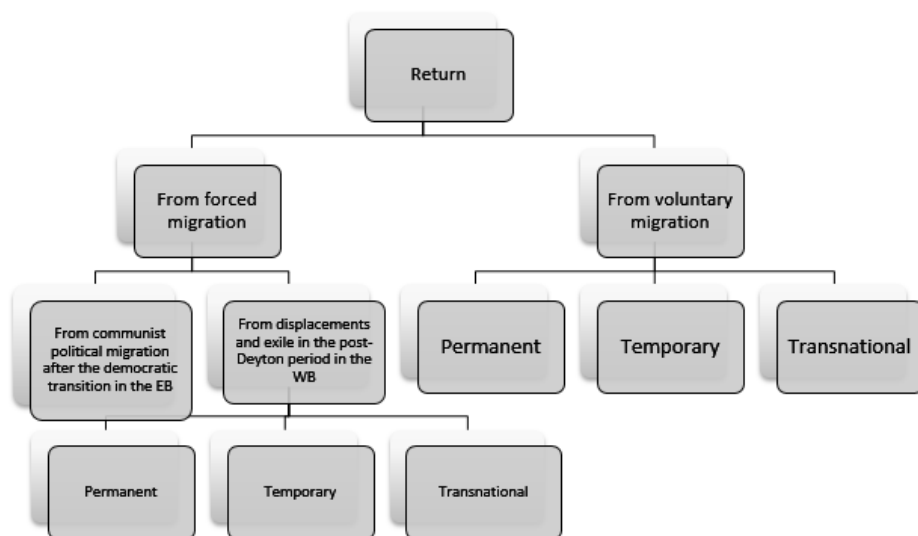
The return as a natural stage of the migration process is one of the biggest democratic achievements of the post-communist migrations. It has two main variations: from voluntary and from forced migration. In the first variation the return is a predictable horizon for migrations such as the educational; it is a normal continuation of the labor migration; it is a natural and repeated stage of mobility.

The return from forced migration with regard to the analysed period of the Balkans has two variations: return after the democratic transition of political migrants of the communist period in the Eastern Balkans; return after forced displacement in the post-conflicts period in the Western Balkans. The first variation covers specific individual cases, relatively limited in number; the second has a considerable empirical referent – both as potential as well as real returnees. This second group is of great political importance, as assuring normal conditions for return is the centre of the policy for the post-conflict reconstruction.

---

<sup>8</sup> Gallup's study is on the WB.

### *Types of return*



The paradox of the return is that opposite types of migration give rise to similar phenomena of return. Forced migrations during the conflicts in Yugoslavia, on the one hand, and the voluntary work and educational migrations, on the other, form three figures of return – permanent, temporary, transnational (Krasteva 2014, Mesic and Bagic 2010):

- *Permanent*. They have closed the circle of forced displacement or migration by coming home. This large group has four variations:
  - “To die at home.” The first variation is nostalgic – many elderly prefer at the dawn of their life to be closer to their ancestors, relatives and homeland (Mesic and Bagic 2010).
  - The planned end of temporary migration. Migration theory defines this second variation as a successful migration project that is finalised through new integration at home – the war has finished, the education has finished, money has been gathered for new accommodation/car.
  - The unplanned end of unsuccessful migration. The lack of integration in the new place makes the return necessary or inevitable.
- *Temporary*. This group includes returnees from forced or voluntary migration – migration has made them more mobile and they are ready to take on new migration provided they find sufficiently interesting opportunities.
- *Transnational*. This is one of the relatively new migrant figures – those who ‘settle in mobility’ and permanently remain in two places. An example are two doctors – one has a prosperous dental office in France, the other – in Germany,

yet they open a common one in Bulgaria as well and each one divides his time between the two countries (Krasteva 2014).

## **Immigration or the timid attractiveness of the post-communist and post-conflict region**

The newer and more unexpected the phenomenon, the bigger the public interest it attracts. The number of immigrants to Albania is insignificant; the net balance is strongly negative: -6.5 (IOM 2007), but this is what comes first in IOM's immigration profile of the country (ibid).

*Three groups of labor migration may be distinguished in SEE:*

- Small, middle, and sometimes bigger business people and entrepreneurs and self-employed immigrants;
- Immigrants employed by other immigrants, by local business people – or very rarely – by the administration;
- Highly-skilled experts, consultants, and investors.

Immigrants' origin varies in the different countries, but on the whole, we can say that the first group consists mainly of tradesmen and business people from the Near and Middle East Arab countries such as Syria, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, China, etc. Representatives of the same countries are found in the second group, but it comprises of more nationalities – Moldavians in Romania, Russians in Bulgaria, citizens of former Yugoslavia countries in Slovenia. In periods of economic advance, immigrant workforce fills certain shortages: in construction – Ukrainians in Romania, Vietnamese in Bulgaria; in the textile industry – Chinese in Romania (Lazaroiu 2007: 158).

The third group originates from the EU, the USA and other developed countries: every one in four immigrants in Romania is from the EU – 24% from Italy and 18% from Spain (Dobre and Arifton 2008); the same (26%) is the relative percentage of EU citizens in Croatia. The highly qualified professionals from the developed countries work with the foreign investors, at the representations of international organizations, and as consultants for local institutions.

Trade and hospitality are the main economic niches where many of the immigrants are concentrated.

The quantitative expression of immigration is quite modest so far: 0.6% of the population in Romania (IOM Romania 2010), and 1.4% in Bulgaria (IOM Bulgaria 2010). This group's political and symbolic significance is much higher. The former is related to the specifics of immigration in the new EU member states and the need for adapted public policies. An interesting paradox seen in countries with new immigration, such as Romania and Bulgaria, is that its profile is more positive than that of countries who have had decades of migration history: the ratio between

the first two groups is in favor of the first – many immigrants have their own business and create employment opportunities for their families and other workers.

The symbolic dimension of immigration is of great importance as well. For countries abandoned by a multitude of emigrants seeking work and opportunities abroad, immigrants, who invest similar energy, labor, and existential meaning, are the bearers of a strong message of attractiveness and new opportunities.

## Types of migration and migration periods

| Stage | Forced |    | Ethnic |    | Trafficking |    | Refugees |    | Retirement |    | Emigration |    | Immigration |    | Return |    |
|-------|--------|----|--------|----|-------------|----|----------|----|------------|----|------------|----|-------------|----|--------|----|
|       | WB     | EB | WB     | EB | WB          | EB | WB       | EB | WB         | EB | WB         | EB | WB          | EB | WB     | EB |
| I     | +      |    | +      | +  | +           | +  | +        |    |            |    | +          | +  |             | +  |        |    |
| II    |        |    |        |    | +           | +  | +        | +  | +          | +  | +          | +  | +           | +  | +      | +  |
| III   |        |    |        |    | +           | +  | +        | +  | +          | +  | +          | +  | +           | +  | +      | +  |
| IV    |        |    |        |    | +           | +  | +        | +  | +          | +  | +          | +  | +           | +  | +      | +  |

The table illustrates the diverse types of migration are not evenly spread neither in time, nor between the two regions. The forced migrations are concentrated in space, as well as in time and they are characteristic only in the conflict Western Balkans in the first half of the 90s. In the same period we find the ethnic migrations of Turks from Bulgaria, Germans and Hungarians from Romania. Bulgaria signs the Geneva Convention in 1993 and would start accepting refugees only after. The retirement migration and the leisure migration have the long history in Croatia, benefiting from its mild climate and beautiful coast. This is a new phenomenon in Bulgaria and Romania and one which is dependent on the crisis, as well the underdeveloped politics of receiving this positive migration – after the emerged interest of the British in the small Bulgarian villages and the ascending tendency in the early 10s, came the disappointment from underdeveloped and unrealizable real-estate market and the withdrawal in the last few years. The return – from both forced and from voluntary migration – begins not simultaneously with, but after the peak of emigration flows.

The migration panorama outlines two tendencies:

- Reduction in the diversification of the forms of migration. By the end of the analysed period they are less than they were at the beginning.
- Normalization of the migration flows and the transition from conflict to regular forms.

## National migration models

Every country has its unique migration profile and model, and the volume contributes to their understanding. My task is to spread the diversity along some an-

alytical axes and offer a synthesized typology. Among the various migration experiences in the different countries, I'll outline four types:

- *Post-conflict*. Elements of which we find in most countries of former Yugoslavia, but is most represented in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- *'All inclusive* – this image I use to name the migration profile which includes all types of migration. A typical example is Albania;
- *New emigration "champion"*. The country that attracts the attention of the European public because of its considerable and intensive migration is by all means Romania.
- *Immigrational*. The country in the region that first began experiencing the transition from emigration to labour migration is Slovenia;

The brief analyses that follow do not aim to deal with the unrealistic task of presenting in depth and detail the respective countries, but single out the elements in their migration profile that make them representative of the given model.

### ***The post-conflict model – Bosnia and Herzegovina***

It is not by coincidence that Bosnia and Herzegovina is the country where the policy on migration is over institutionalized: all fourteen governments had ministries responsible for refugees and return<sup>9</sup>. It is not by accident that the responsible institution in Bosnia and Herzegovina is called *Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees*. The suffering of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who paid the highest migration price in the conflicts and wars in former Yugoslavia, calls for institutional – both national and international – counterbalancing.

The other logical and expected fact is that in the decade after the Dayton Agreement, the *return* from exile comes into the centre of migration policy. Fifty percent of the refugees and temporarily displaced persons (Marinkovic 2007) returned in that period; after that the return continued but at a much lower rate. Many refugees prefer to stay in the states where the ethnic group they belong to is a majority (Mirocvasic 2003).

The return is not always a smooth process: some refugees are returned from countries that no longer offer their hospitality, while the home countries are not able to provide housing or other solutions which would make the return possible. Sixty percent of the returnees from Germany are made to settle in towns or villages different from their own that leads to changing their status of refugees to that of displaced people (Marinkovic 2007: 65).

Nowadays we can outline two tendencies: the first one is the terminal fading of returns<sup>10</sup>. The other is the introduction of higher criteria by which the international community evaluates its impact. The term *sustainable return* (Mesic and

---

<sup>9</sup> (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2010)

<sup>10</sup> Similar tendencies exist in relation to the return of Serbs to Croatia (Mesic and Bagic 2010).

Bagic 2010) that links it more explicitly to the right to jobs, homes, and healthcare is being used.

Both tendencies illustrate the coming of the end of a migration model, marked by forced migration, and the transition to a normal model of migration. Citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina are among the most mobile in Europe; they form the largest immigration group in Slovenia, the third largest in Austria and the fifth largest in Sweden. Emigrants reach the impressive number of 1 350 000 (ibid) coming from a population of just 3.8 million.

I will conclude with a somewhat curious tendency. Over the past few years there has been an abrupt fall in the attractiveness of the traditionally most prestigious destination – the USA (from 15 000 emigrants in 2000 to 3 789 in 2006); while the attractiveness of Slovenia has risen: the migration towards a neighbouring Balkan country grew more than 6 times (from 2016 emigrants in 2000 to 12 477 in 2007). This fact could be seen as the symbolic reconciliation with the region and also as a positive rating of the opportunities for professional realization that it provides.

### ***‘All inclusive’: Albania***

“Country on the move”(Carletto et al 2006 ), “laboratory for the study of migration and development” (King 2005), “new migration order” (Van Hear 1998), “significant and unique case” (Vulnerati 2007) – numerous are the metaphors and definitions with which scholars try to capture the uniqueness of the country, which after long decades of pathological closeness is now unstoppably headed towards migration. “Migration is one of the most important social and economic phenomena affecting Albania. Since 1990, almost a quarter of the Albanian population has left the country along with a large urban-rural migration” (IOM 2007: 23). The characterizations of researchers and international organizations such as IOM introduce the first two aspects of the Albanian model: huge numbers – every one in four Albanians is a migrant; as well as the deep socio-economic impact. The very structure of Albanian population is being changed. On the one hand, Albania has positive demographics - one of the highest in Europe. On the other, emigration is age and gender selective, which leads to two negative consequences: reduction of the relative quota of employable young people; and the accelerated ageing of the Albanian population<sup>11</sup>. Demographic imbalance is a serious issue. Equally serious is the socio-economic imbalance: the level of remittances is three times higher than the direct foreign investment and nearly twice as much as the help that comes from international sources (IOM 2007). The centre of development is moving from the country to its Diaspora: “Diaspora becomes increasingly important for the growth and the socio-economic development of the country” (Vulnerati 2007: 76).

Another dimension of the Albanian model is found in the variety of the forms of migration. This is a small country producing large trafficking. The pair “ir-

---

<sup>11</sup> The relative portion of the population under the age of 15 is reduced from 33% to 29.3% for the period 1989-2001, while that over 65 has risen from 5.31% to 7.5% (Vulnerati 2007)

regular migration – forced return” is clearly manifested: several hundred thousand Albanians have been returned from the European countries<sup>12</sup>. Typical of the Albanian experience are some “exotic” forms of migration such as the 5000 Albanians who sought asylum at the embassies of western countries in Tirana (June-July 1990), the ships overloaded with would-be emigrants traveling to Italy, the wave of migrants after the crisis with the financial pyramids (Vulnerati 2007: 76).

Some Western perceptions describe the Balkan migrations as “Balkanized”: exotic, tending to be irregular, multiple – both in terms of forms and numbers. Albanian migrations are often perceived as their closest illustration.

### ***New emigration “champion”: Romania***

“Visible, but not numerous” – this is how the French researcher of Romanian origin Dana Diminescu summarized Romanian migration in the EU just six years ago (Diminescu 2004). Time has accelerated the first characteristic and made the second invalid: Romanian immigrants in the EU are around 2.5 - 2.7 million. Just in Italy the number is quarter of a million in 2008 - 796 000, twice as much than in the previous year. The situation in Spain is completely symmetrical: 797 000 (OECD 2010).

To a great extent, Romanian emigration offers a synthesis of the specifics of the outward flows in SEE. It is best explained by the neoclassical economic theory which has two conceptual centers: the differences in salaries and the geographical differences in the supply and demand of the workforce (Borjas 1989). Romania is characterized by both oversupply of labor and low income: “the first year of economic restructuring brought also a diminishing of the real earning. Considering the value of 1990 as a reference point (100%) in 2000 the real earning barely reached 59% of this value. Although the real earnings increased constantly in 2006 they still represented only 97.4% of the 1990 value” (Dobre and Ariton 2008: 188). Two external, European, factors made migration flows easier and more numerous: the opening of the Schengen Area for visa-free travel in 2001 and EU membership in 2007. The case of Romania illustrates two of the advantages of emigration for the sending countries: reduction of the pressure on the local labor market and remittances. Romania never reached the unemployment levels of neighboring Eastern European countries; unemployment fell from 10.04% in 1997 to 4.1% in 2007 before the crisis (Dobre and Ariton 2008: 185). Romanian President Traian Băsescu<sup>13</sup> recently summarized in an attractive way the two advantages by appealing to emigrants not to return because the country needed their remittances<sup>14</sup>, and also because it could not offer them any jobs.

---

<sup>12</sup> (IOM 2007) 42 254 до 2006 г.

<sup>13</sup> Trud newspaper, 10.08.10

<sup>14</sup> Romania is the biggest net recipient of remittances in the EU. In terms of GDP it occupies top position together with Bulgaria. At the same time the 42% reduction of Romanian remittances in 2009 considerably exceeds the average in Europe – 18% (Comini and Faes-Cannito 2010).

Romania illustrates the appetite that the population of SEE has for emigration, stimulated by European integration and the free movement of labor. Economic theories of migration argue that labor mobility will continue to attract many citizens of the new or future member states until considerable differences in the earnings and quality of life continue to exist.

### ***The immigration model: Slovenia***

The transition from emigration to immigration increases the countries' self-confidence and the discourses on immigration often precede its stable and sizeable qualitative expression. One of the countries, where reality is quite close to the discourse, is Slovenia. The other one is Croatia, which also has a positive net migration balance (0.5 according to IOM data, 2010). The net balance of Slovenia is 2.2. The percentage of foreign population is about to reach European levels: 8.1%. The percentage of immigrant labor is even higher: 10%. The citizens of other EU member states are not many – 0.2% of the population (Vasileva 2009: 3), but relatively more numerous than that in Bulgaria and Romania.<sup>15</sup>

Two aspects are of material importance for the theme of our conference: the clearly regional profile of the immigrants and the regional policy of Slovenia. According to data provided by Eurostat, of the top five foreign nationalities, four are from former Yugoslavia: 47.3% of all immigrants are from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 20.1% - from Serbia, 10.9% - from Macedonia, and 10.2% - from Croatia (Vasileva 2009: 5). Ninety-five percent of the work permits are for nationals of the former Yugoslav republics, the majority are issued to people from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The regional migration policy of the country has two dimensions: bilateral and multilateral. Slovenia has entered into agreements with Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina for the employment of their nationals and after the crisis will most probably continue establishing similar agreements. The more ambitious goal is to provoke a debate about the creation of a zone for free movement of the workforce in the Western Balkans in the period before the EU accession of the rest of the countries (ibid).

The Slovenian example presents an interest on two levels: *regionalization* and *europeanization*. The country is characterized by intensive regional migration, which is being supported by the active policy of the country in the Western Balkans. Slovenia is a leader in the implementation of the Mediterranean model of transition from emigration to immigration. This is precisely the motorway that would shade the Balkan specifics and would gradually lead to the acquisition of a European migration profile.

---

<sup>15</sup> According to Eurostat data, EU citizens in Bulgaria and Romania are invisible for the statistics – 0.0% of the population (Vasileva 2009: 3).



\*\*\*

There are, of course, no pure models, and there are no countries that belong to a single model. Labor immigration exists in all of the countries, together with high levels of labor emigration. Croatia can be characterized as a mixed type between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia, as well as – in different ratios – Macedonia and Serbia. Moldova is similar to Albania, Bulgaria comes close to the migration profile of Romania, but operates on a smaller scale. Time will show how the migration models of Montenegro and Kosovo will crystallize.

## Trends: from extraordinary to ordinary flows

If we assume the impossible task of summarizing by a single word the complex, contradictory, and diverse Balkan migrations at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it would be **normalization**. This movement takes a variety of expressions; I'll delineate four main trends (Krasteva 2010):

- *From forced migrations to returns.* Conflicts and wars in former Yugoslavia produced huge numbers of IDPs and refugees. Fifteen years later, return still remains an 'unfinished business' (Bobic 2010). Many IDPs and refugees will never return to their native places, because these places are not the same, and interethnic structures have changed. Return, has, however, become a viable alternative to displacement.
- *From ethnic to economic logic.* Second only to forced migrations, ethnic migrations have been an important type of human mobility in the end 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. A decade later the same populations return to the same destinations, but the logic is no longer ethnic but economic. One third of a million Bulgarian citizens of Turkish origin, who, on the eve of change, were made by the communist authorities to leave for Turkey, are a case in point. A few years later on, the economic difficulties push many representatives of the biggest minority group in Bulgaria to find jobs either in Turkey, or in Germany, as network theory rightly anticipates.
- *From mass emigration to temporary or circular migration.* Women gathering strawberries in Spain returning home for the winter; men working in construction abroad with their families remaining at home; highly qualified professionals moving from one job to another, irrespective of the country – temporary and circular migration take a diversity of forms. Nowadays it affects all professions – from seasonal workers to experts. Return becomes a usual element of labor mobility plans. More than half (60%) of those who plan to migrate, intend to do so just for just a few years (Gallup 2009).
- *From emigration to immigration.* Bosnians, Serbs, and Macedonians in Slovenia; Austrians, Germans, and Dutch in Croatia; Chinese almost everywhere; Russians, Ukrainians, and British in Bulgaria; Moldovan in Romania - immigration in SEE is a fact. The pull factors vary from the soft climate and beauty of the Adriatic coast, to the relatively low cost of real estate in Bulgaria and

Romania, to the economic niches in the relatively new market economies. Emigration still largely prevails over immigration, but EU integration may reverse the picture, as it has already done so in Slovenia. The Mediterranean model that transformed Spain, Italy and Greece from emigration to immigration countries only two-three decades ago could be realized in several Balkan countries (Krasteva 2010: 10 – 11).

- *From diversification to convergence of the Balkan migration models.* In the early 90s we can observe two opposing trends and migration profiles in the West and East Balkans. The West Balkans strongly politicise migration, which becomes a function of conflicts, wars and ethnic cleansing. This dramatic turn happens in Yugoslavia after a long period of openness towards work immigration and return. The Eastern Balkans on the other hand are on the opposite pole - they economize migration as it has escaped the communist political logic of radical restrictiveness. More than a decade is necessary to reverse this trend, to transition to convergence of both forms and trends of migration. The end of diversification from the early 90s, when the dividing line of migration profiles passes through conflicts and marks temporary convergence of national migration profiles in the mid-present decade, before beginning to outline the new distinctions, related to the Europeanization of migration.

## **Conclusion:**

### **From migration used by the elites against the citizens to migration used by citizens against the elites and for themselves**

The analysis of twenty five years of Balkan migrations could be sum up in five conclusions.

Looking for a job and not seeking asylum. Labor migration, jobs and better quality of life as top reasons for human mobility present a huge achievement that occurred over the past two and a half decades – both for the ones who left the closed societies of Albania, Bulgaria, and Romania, and for the post-conflict and post-war countries of former Yugoslavia.

The second conclusion refers to the possibility to discuss the Eastern and the Western Balkans as a single analytical entity. Twenty years ago the two parts of the region were developing in opposite directions: transition from closed to open, and from political to economic migrations in Bulgaria, Romania, and Albania; and just the opposite transition in former Yugoslavia. The last decades brought together the migration development of the two parts of the region.

None of crisis - the economic crisis and the refugee crisis - is coped with efficiently, both show the lack of strategic thinking, good governance and capacity to manage migration.

Citizens have appropriated migration. If at the beginning of 1990s forced and ethnic migration have been used by the elites in WB against the citizens, the

latter both in WB and EB have transformed migration into a radical critic against inefficient and corrupted elites and into a powerful social capital for realization of professional, educational, family, existential projects.

The “roads” are more attractive than the “roots”, millions of emigrants have divested the region of significance and illustrate its deterritorialization. The immigration could not still compensate for the emigration, but the attractiveness of the Balkans as a possible migration destination is growing. The day when pull factors reach the strength of push factors the citizens of the region will celebrate the end of ‘balkanization’ and will welcome a new image of an attractive and hospitable region. This day is not tomorrow, but it is in the foreseeable future. The reterritorialization is strengthening and its agency diversifying: the returnees who choose the roots for a new beginning; the circular migrants who earn abroad and spend at home; the immigrants – they all invest labor, capital, and existential value in the Balkans.

## Bibliography

- Krasteva A. (2014) *Ot migracija kăm mobilnost: politiki i patiŝča*. Sofija: Izdatelstvona NBU.
- Hristov P. (2012). Gurbet i identiĉnost (po materiali ot Zapadna Bulgarija, Istoĉna Srbija i Zapadna Makedonija). *Sociologiĉeski problemi*, 1-2, 186-202.
- Baldwin-Edwards M. (2005) *Balkan migrations and the European Union: patterns and trends*.- Romanian Journal of European Studies, N 4, 31 – 44.
- Barbulescu R. (2009) *The economic crisis and its effects for intra-european movement: mobility patterns and state responses. The case of Romanians in Spain*. Paper at the Annual Conference 2009 of the Centre on migration, policy and society, University of Oxford “New times? Economic crisis, geopolitical transformation and the emergent migration order”
- Bobic M. (2010) Serbian unfinished business. Refugees and IDPS.- In: Krasteva A., A. Kasabova, D. Karabonova (eds) (2010) *Migrations from and to South-eastern Europe*. Ravenna: Longo Editore, 211 – 224.
- Bonifazi C. and M. Mamolo (2004) *Past and current trends of Balkan migrations*.- *Espaces, populations, societies*, N 3, 519 – 531.
- Borjas G. J. (1989) Economic theory and international migration.-*International Migration Review*, N 3, 457 – 485.
- Bozic S. (2007) *Croatia*.- In: Migration flows in Southeast Europe, a compendium of national perspectives. Belgrade: Group 484, 11 – 42.
- Carletto G., Davis B, Stampini M. and Zezza A. (2006) A country on the move: international migrations in post-communist Albania.- *International Migration Review* 40 (4), 767 – 85.

- Comini D. and F. Faes-Cannito (2009) *Remittances from the EU down for the first time in 2009, flows to non-EU countries more resilient*.-Eurstat, 2010, N 40.
- Diminescu D. (2004) *Visibles, mais peu nombreux. Les circulations migratoires roumaines*. Paris : MSH.
- Dobre S. and V. Arition (2008) *Romania. Migration and development: creating regional labor markets and labor market circulation as response to regional market demands*. Paper for Group 484.
- GALLUP (2009) *The impact of migration*.- Balkan Monitor. Insights and perceptions: voices of the Balkans. June 2009, 1-9.
- King R. (2005) Albania as a labotary for the study of migration and development.- *Journal of South Europe and the Balkans*, 7(2), 13 – 56.
- Krasteva A. (2007) Post-communist discovery of immigration: the case of Bulgaria.- In: Berggren E. et al (eds) *Irregular migration, informal labor and community: a challenge for Europe*. Maastricht: Shaker Publishing, 104 – 117.
- Krasteva A. (2007a) *Bulgaria*.- In: Migration flows in Southeast Europe, a compendium of national perspectives. Belgrade: Group 484, 163 – 193.
- Krasteva A. et al (2007 b) *Human trafficking: the Bulgarian case*. Paper for HERA international project.
- Krasteva A. (2008) L’immigration en Bulgarie : culture d’entreprise et questions d’intégration.- *Hommes et migrations*, N 1275, 112 – 126.
- Krasteva A., A.Kasabova, D. Karabonova (eds) (2010) *Migrations from and to Southeastern Europe*. Ravenna: Longo Editore.
- Krasteva A.(2010) *Introduction*.-In: Krasteva A., A.Kasabova, D. Karabonova (eds) *Migrations from and to Southeastern Europe*. Ravenna: Longo Editore, 2010, 9 – 14.
- Lazariou S. (2007) *Romania*.- In: Migration flows in Southeast Europe, a compendium of national perspectives. Belgrade: Group 484, 109 – 161.
- Laczko F., A. von Koppenfels and J. Barthel. (2002) Trafficking in women from Central and Eastern Europe: a review of statistical data.- In: Laczko F., I. Stacher and Koppenfels A. von (eds) *New challenges for migration policy in Central and Eastern Europe*. The Hague: IOM: TMC Asser press, 153 – 174.
- Marinkovic D. (2007) *Bosnia and Herzegovina*.- In: Migration flows in Southeast Europe, a compendium of national perspectives. Belgrade: Group 484, 43 – 75.
- Mesic M. and D. Bagic (2010) Serb returnees in Croatia – the question of return sustainability.-*International migration*, vol. 48 (2), 133 – 160.

- Morokvasic M. (2003). Transnational mobility and gender & a view from post-war Europe. In M. Morokvasic, U. Erel, & K. Shinozaki (Eds.), *Crossing borders and shifting boundaries: gender on the move*. Opladen: Leske+Burich.
- OECD (2010) International migration outlook. [www.oecd.org/els/migration/imo](http://www.oecd.org/els/migration/imo)
- Papademetriou D. and A. Terrazas (2009) *Immigrants and the current economic crisis: research evidence, policy challenges and implications*. [http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/lmi\\_recessionJan09.pdf](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/lmi_recessionJan09.pdf)
- Pons-Vignon N. (2010) Don't waste the crisis: critical perspective for a new economic model. Geneva :ILO. [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/genericdocument/wcms\\_141464.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/genericdocument/wcms_141464.pdf)
- Van Hear N. (1998) *New Diasporas*. London: UCL Press.
- Vasileva K. (2009) *Population and social conditions*.- Eurostat, N 94, 1-7.
- Vulnetari J. (2007) *Albanian migration and development: state of the art review*. IMISCO working paper. September 2007.

**Ана Крастева**

## **Мобилност на Балкану: привременост, врсте, трендови**

Циљ овог чланка је да пажљиво анализира феномен балканских миграција, и да истакне повезаност између континуитета и дисконтинуитета у образложењу миграција, изражену у трендовима, као и у продорима и променама. Четири периода су изражена кроз главне трендове. Типологија балканских миграција идентификује десет врста, разврстаних у три веће категорије. Чланак разликује и упоређује modele националне миграције и црта панорамски слику главних трендова у последњој четвртини века.

### *Кључне речи:*

Југоисточна  
Европа, присилна  
миграција, етнички  
миграције,  
миграција радне  
снаге, повратак