

Migration as an area of political science research

Abstract: *The aim of the present article is to indicate the importance of migration in political science research. Compared with other scientific disciplines, political science took interest in the recognition of migration processes relatively late, not infrequently analysing the problem as a complement for research on other topics. Today, however, migrations as an important social and political issue, gained the status of an important and „autonomic“ research area for political scientists. It is therefore necessary to consider what the specifics of political science in relation to migration is expressed in, particularly, what issues concerning migration should be included in the mainstream of political scientists' interest and how political science research can contribute to the analysis of migration processes. The article consists of two parts. In the first part the author explains why political science ought to deal with migration. In the second part, there are distinguished areas particularly important from the point of view of political science research on migration.*

Keywords: *migration, political science, state and migration, migration and politics*

Migration processes should be considered nowadays as one of the most important components of the emerging global order. Their influence is evident both at the micro level (at the level of individuals and families), at theme so level (at the level of local communities, unions and regions), as well as at the macro level (in relation to countries, integration groups, such as the European Union and more broadly – the whole international order). Migrations have been a part of the human history since human being underwent the process of socialization. It

was not until the 19th century, however, that migrations took the form of mass movements, a crucial and permanent part of international reality. The growing importance of migration as an essential social, economic and political phenomenon took place in the 20th century, being the reason why there was coined the

Rafal Raczynski, Ph.D

Pomeranian University in Slupsk,
The Faculty of Philology and History Institute
of History and Political Science

term „the age of migration“ in reference to the century [Castles and Miller 2009]. There are signs, however, that in the future also the 21st century will be referred to as „the era of diasporas“. This is because in the coming decades the determinants of migration will probably intensify rather than weaken. Among the most important driving forces that stimulate migration movements one may include deepening globalization processes; uneven economic development of particular parts of the world; demographic trends (the increase of the total world population with the coexistence of the depopulation phenomenon in developed countries and high population growth in the most impoverished countries); wars, armed conflicts and humanitarian disasters as well as environmental hazards.

Migration, its sources, patterns and consequences are complex and multidimensional phenomena. Therefore, it is commonly claimed that what is required for the scientific reflection in their scope is an interdisciplinary approach. Migration processes became the object of scientific interest as early as in the late 19th century. The first scientific disciplines that undertook to study these issues included: statistics, demography, geography and sociology. In the next century they were joined by other disciplines, such as history, economics, linguistics or law [Knopek, 2007: 101-102]. In the recent decades also political science has shown an interest in the issues of migration, although it is pointed out in this context that political science analysis of the subject is presented often within an incidental and limited scope. At the same time it emphasizes, however, that political science has a strong research capability in this area [Lesinska, 2011: 1].

The above-mentioned disciplines, with their usual approaches and with the use of appropriate research methods attempt to analyse migration processes. Statistics focuses primarily on the determination of the range, intensity and number of emigrant waves. Population and economic geography focuses on the spatial dimensions of migration and their impact on the social and economic situation and development, with regard to countries both sending as well as receiving migrants. In demographic research migration is studied in the context of its influence on the size, composition and reproduction of a given population. Sociology recognises migration processes primarily through the prism of their participants and wider communities. It attempts to identify how the migration movements of the population affect the social structure and community ties, referring to categories such as identity, community, nation, etc. [Jansen, 1970]. Economic sciences study the impact of migration movements on the state and prospects for development of economies. An essential role is played here by issues related to the shortage of productive capabilities, which may be complemented by attracting workers from abroad or issues connected with measurable migration costs [Hatton and Williamson, 2008]. Within the framework of law sciences the main cognitive emphasis is put on the analysis of formal and legal conditions governing the migration flows and determining the status of migrants. In addition to references to the sources of the national law (constitution, laws, regulations), an important area of research in this field constitute also international regulations, including those relating to human rights (e.g. determining the refugee status). Language researchers and philologists focus on the links and linguistic influences attributable to population movements, and examine the linguistic culture of the immigrant communities. Historians, on the other hand, perceive migration considering the time perspective [Manning and Trimmer, 2013]. They reconstruct migration movements by means of written and unwritten sources. The analysis of both official documents stored in archives, as well as personal documents, literature of memoirs and diaries is an important aspect in this respect [Knopek, 2007: 102-103].

In the view of the above, it is necessary to consider what the specifics of political science in relation to migration is expressed in, particularly, what migration issues should be included in the mainstream of political scientists' interest and how political science research can contribute to the analysis of migration processes.

Political science is a relatively young scientific discipline, classified into humanities and social sciences. The object of its study is politics. However, due to the ambiguity of the term, the subject matter of the discipline is not infrequently controversial [Chodubski 2013: 32]. For example, Andrew Heywood in one of more popular textbooks, considered an introduction to political science, enumerates four basic ways of understanding the term of *politics* – politics

as the art of government, politics as public affairs, politics as compromise and consensus and politics as power and the distribution of resources [Heywood 2002: 5]. This semantic diversity is also perceptible with regard to Polish political science, where the concept of politics is generally identified with: 1. the activities of public institutions; 2. the exercise of public authority; 3. seeking for compromise and consensus – politics is deemed as a method to mitigate social conflicts; 4. the art of governance; 5. public life and public affairs, in contrast to personal and private matters; 6. the decision-making process taking place within the framework of the institutional order; 7. solving social problems arising from the deficit of goods and resources, which cause deprivation of individuals and social groups [Modrzejewski, 2011: 65]. Without going into semantic and methodological details, falling beyond the narrow scope of this article, it is noted that political science is the science which deals with the study of political life of societies in different forms of its manifestation, and focuses particularly on the analysis of social activities associated with the desire to acquire and exercise power within countries and in international relations [Chodubski 2013: 32]. The basic categories used in the analysis of political science are: state, power, conflict, political community, political system, party system, etc. At the same time political science, as an interdisciplinary science which uses the achievements of many related sciences (such as history, sociology, law, psychology, philosophy or economics), is not equipped with its own exclusive research methods, but creatively uses methods of other research disciplines.

In terms of political science, migration processes should therefore be considered primarily from the point of view of power, state and their influence on domestic and international policies. It should be also noticed that the „political“ impact of migration has become in recent years particularly important and easily perceived. While the issues of migration in the past were primarily the domain of power, handled behind closed doors of offices of ministries responsible for economic or social affairs and, thus, absent from the mainstream politics, migration problems have recently undergone the process of so called politicization and gained the status of one of the most important topics of public and political discourse, often arousing controversy and evoking extreme emotions. Accordingly, the political aspects of migration dominate today's public debate, and apart from state institutions, other actors such as the mass media, political parties, churches or various institutions of broadly defined civil society are involved in it. This situation is obviously reflected in the scientific thought. Hence, population migration may be currently deemed as one of the most relevant areas in the political science research [Chodubski, 2006: 14]. It should be emphasized, however, that the main object of the interest of political science is international migration, while internal migration is paid attention primarily in the context of research on social policy of the state.

International migration for several reasons constitutes a natural research area for political scientists. Firstly, its reasons are often political in nature. Emigrant waves are in fact caused by wars, armed conflicts, persecution, human rights violations, totalitarian or authoritarian regimes or badly managed social, economic or demographic policy, etc. Secondly, as a rule, they generate also political consequences (tensions, and even interstate conflicts, internal political tensions, economic and social policy adjustments, threats to internal security, etc.). Finally, migration influences the state (one of the most important categories in the political science) in a complex and multidimensional way and, thus, falls within the scope of interest of political science. They can affect both domestic and foreign policy of state bodies. Hence, the application of a state-oriented point of view is a fundamental requirement for the recognition of migration processes in the context of political science.

Since international migration is defined as determined by a variety of factors population movements from one country to another, by its very nature it is inextricably connected with the state. The sine qua non condition of international migration is, hence, an act of crossing the border and the transition from the jurisdiction of one state under the jurisdiction of another. And according to a classical threefold definition proposed by the German lawyer George Jellinek, the state consists of population, territory and power. In such an arrangement, population changes caused by migration processes, in particular those taking place on a larger scale, as a rule, do exert influence on the relationship between population (society) and the superior authority. The influx of immigrants, resulting in the pluralism of societies and often also challenging the current understanding of the national and political community leads to the formulation of various new and sometimes contradictory demands and expectations directed to the state authorities. It generates specific political consequences and forces state institutions to act. On the other hand, also the state authorities generally show interest in what people reach the territory under their control (restricting or facilitating access to the territory) and try to maintain the existing political order – to make it accepted by the newly arrived members of the society (sometimes it is „silent“ acceptance). Typically, the influx of emigrant waves entails particular concerns of the society and political elite. In their result, hence, state authorities need to take specific political decisions.

One of the first scientists who found international migration as a primarily political process involving the movement of population through the sovereign state territories (the transition from the sovereignty and jurisdiction of one state under the sovereignty and jurisdiction of another) was Aristide Zolberg. He was one of the first scientists to note that the state, by means of its policy, may substantially affect the development of migration processes [Zolberg 1981]. Nowadays this thesis does not arouse major controversy. It is stressed in this regard that, as the migration processes interact with state bodies, so the states by means of a variety of instruments (including migration policy) seek to influence migration flows. Much larger objections are raised by the question whether the state can effectively control them. Problems with the influx of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and North Africa into Europe, which emerged in the summer of 2015 as well as the situation on the US – Mexican border (where even the fence and detection systems are not able to stop illegal immigrants [Ewing 2014 Pecoud and de Guchteneire 2006]) illustrate that states have rather limited abilities in this respect. Various researchers see the sources of the weakness in a variety of factors, among which the most frequently indicated are the conditions related to the functioning of labour markets [Hollifield 1992], the development of the idea of human rights and their protection system [Jacobson 1997] or the intensification of globalization processes [Sassen 1998]. Undoubtedly, international migration contributes to the transformation of a traditionally perceived nation state. As indicated by Magdalena Lesinska they constitute one of the forces whose influence makes the state lose the monopoly with regard to the three essential pillars of its functioning: sovereign border control (territory and population), the conditions of membership in the community (access to rights, including political ones) and national and state identity [Lesinska 2013: 8]. Thus, migration processes lead also to changes in the understanding of other categories fundamental for political science, such as sovereignty, nation, political community, citizenship, interest groups, etc. (typically understood in a broad sense).

The primary tool by means of which the state seeks to influence the processes of migration is migration policy. It is also one of the key areas of research for political scientists studying

the links between politics and migration. The concept of migration policy in the broad sense can be understood as „a catalogue of instruments conducted and created by the state or its components, including both passive and active forms of immigration and emigration management“ [Duszczuk, 2008: 12]. This policy is determined by both internal and external factors and should be considered in the broader context of individual policies conducted by the state (such as foreign, social or economic policies). As a side note, it should be emphasized here that such an approach to the subject makes the political science perspective particularly useful in the analysis of migration policy. The most frequently indicated thematic areas (closely linked to migration policy) in which elements of the political science analysis occur include:

1. The institutional dimension of the migration policy making process, i.e. the analysis of institutions which have an impact on the process of migration policy creation (interest groups, political parties, courts, trade unions and employers' unions, immigrant and ethnic groups, etc.).
2. Migration policy models (types of migration policies, developed with the consideration of variables such as costs, profits, interests, level of the political conflict etc.).
3. Issues of the international (supranational) migration regime, which occurs primarily in the context of the European Union as a new type of multi-level system of migration management, including the issue of the so-called Europeanization of migration policy.
4. Migration policy making and its content (starting with the issue of politicization of the migration, through its subjective and objective scope to the evaluation of its results) [Lesinska, 2011: 11-12].

In addition to a general indication of the relationship between the state and migration processes, and presentation of the role of migration policy in their mutual interactions one can also distinguish thematic areas, whose analysis is particularly significant from the point of view of political science and should be the a significant focus of political scientists. These areas include:

1. Interactions between migration and national and international security

One of the first researchers who as early as in the early 1990s drew attention to the issue of migration through the prism of national and international security was Myron Weiner [Weiner 1990]. In the mid-1990s he wrote: „Migration and refugee issues, no longer the sole concern of ministries of labour or immigration, are now matters of high international politics, engaging the attention of heads of state, cabinets, and key ministries involved in defence, internal security, and external relations“ [Weiner 1996: 17]. The analysis of the so-called migration-security nexus, however, became particularly significant especially after the attacks of 11 September 2001, which also contributed to the interest of political scientists in the subject. The issue of the impact of migration on national security includes not only the access to the territory or border control, but is also linked with the problems of social cohesion, effectiveness of the state structures and the stability of the political and constitutional system. In the context of migration processes, among the main threats to the state and international security most frequently indicated problems include: terrorism (both international and domestic), illegal migration (including smuggling and trafficking in human beings and the rapid, uncontrolled influx of large numbers of immigrants), organized crime. In addition, with regard to interstate relations, migration can be a source of tensions and conflicts as well as an instrument of pressure.

2. The impact of migration on social and economic policy

Population movements entail certain implications for social and economic policies as well as for interrelated demographic policy of the state. They are also an important factor determining the direction of migration flows. These consequences are usually considered through the prism of profit and loss for both the country sending as well as the one receiving immigrants. For instance, with regard to the demographic aspect they involve a change in the population size (reducing or increasing the populations of the sending and receiving country, respectively), and a modification of the demographic structure of a given population (e.g. either slowing down or halting the population aging process in the host countries and their deepening in the countries sending migrants). In the economic aspect, the profits of the host country include above all acceleration or maintenance of the economic growth, filling profession niches in the labour market, reduction of the costs of workforce trainings, maintaining production costs at a low level, etc. The losses of the country which sends migrants are associated with the so-called „brain drain“, the costs of education or economic degradation of depopulated areas. In the area of social policy, the main focus in the context of migration processes is placed on social costs associated with the risk of social divisions and ethnically or nationally motivated conflicts, social costs associated with the implementation of welfare functions of the state, anti-discrimination measures, programmes aimed at the integration of immigrants into society. It is pointed out that the issues of demographic, social and economic policies are of crucial significance when formulating the immigration policy of the state and its attitude towards migrants.

3. The impact of migration on the party system and functioning of certain interest groups

In recent years problems relating to migration and the attitude towards immigrants and refugees, as an important social issue polarizing public opinion, became in some countries one of the leading themes of political discourse, which manifests itself especially during election campaigns. It is noted that parties have begun to use the subject of migration as an important element for positioning on the political scene. It is stressed in this regard that the emergence of migration issues in the political debate contributes to the shift of the party system to the right on the ideological „left-right“ axis. It is reflected in the party rhetoric and in formulated demands usually aimed at tightening the control over migration. For example, studies conducted in the years 1990–2002 in France, Germany and the UK revealed that: first – when followed by increased public interest in migration issues, migration policy becomes more restrictive and, on the other hand – the left-wing governments are more likely to conduct liberal integration policy (with regard to immigrants already residing in the country), but at the same time they conduct a restrictive control policy [Lesinska, 2011: 17]. An issue of the analysis of the links between migration and the increasing popularity of the extreme right accompanied by the development of the phenomenon of anti-immigrant populism may constitute another thread [Betz 1994, Schain et.al. 2002, Bade 2008]. The attitude of various interest groups to migration issues and their impact on state migration policy making, which may take the form of lobbying for specific, favourable from the point of view of their businesses (liberalizing or tightening migration flows) solutions may also fall within the scope of interest of the political science analysis. The basic interest groups showing commitment to this topic include employers' organizations, trade unions, organizations working for human rights or diasporas.

4. Impact of immigrant communities on the state policy

Political activity of diasporas should be analysed both from the point of view of the country receiving immigrants as well as the country sending emigrants. In the former case the foremost significance gains the issue of political inclusion of immigrants in the political system of the host country and, then, their impact on policy-making of the state institutions. Immigrants, having been conferred voting rights become a potential electorate, and thus fall within the scope of interest of political entities, including in particular political parties (especially when the proportion of immigrants in society is quite considerable). Parties, recognizing the importance of immigrants begin to seek their votes, and therefore formulate specific proposals, in line with the demands of the immigrant communities, and include them in the political programmes. To enable this to happen, the first condition to be met is political inclusion of immigrants, which can easily be defined as: „the process of integration (as opposed to exclusion) of an individual or a group in the sphere of political community“ [Lesinska 2013: 7]. Considering the impact of diasporas on the policy from the point of view of the sending country, one may notice that the immigrant communities can be a tool for lobbying and exerting political influence in another country. With regard to Poland a good example is the case of the involvement of the Polish American Congress in the issue of NATO enlargement to include Poland. In this process, the official activities of the Polish diplomacy aimed at obtaining majority support for ratification of the accession documents by the US Senate were supported by members of the Polish community in America who, through meetings and coordinated actions of dispatch of letters, tried to mobilise their senators to take a favourable stance on the matter. The political impact of diasporas can be finally considered also as an important factor intensifying interstate relations. In case of Poland it may be illustrated by the example of Polish – Icelandic relations that have developed largely due to the fact that in the first decade of the 21st century there was formed a large Polish community in Iceland. Thus, for instance, Poland established Consulate General, then the Embassy and, in the initial phase of the financial crisis granted a loan in the amount of approx. 200 million dollars to Iceland.

5. Migration and human rights.

Migration processes can be considered as a factor undermining security of the state. At the same time, however, not infrequently they pose a threat also to their participants. That is why migration entails the issue of human rights protection. After World War II there was observed a rapid development of both the idea of human rights as well as international law regulating their protection. As a result, today these rights are guaranteed on a global level (universal system created within the framework of the UN), on a regional level (e.g. within the framework of the Council of Europe) and on the level of the national legislation. Under these systems there are distinguished regulations relating to immigrants (both voluntary and forced). As early as in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 in Art. 13 there were stipulated provisions concerning freedom of movement and residence as ones of the most fundamental human rights: 1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state, 2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country. In the field of political science and the interrelated science of international relations, the analysis of relations between migration and human rights protection concerns

at least three areas: 1. forced migration – refugees, 2. illegal migration (especially the practice of smuggling and trafficking), 3. protection of migrant workers. In recent decades, in relation to those areas there were developed various legal acts regulating the status, conferring certain rights, and protecting migrants. With regard to the first area it is primarily *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1951), to the second *Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children* and *Protocol against the smuggling of migrants by land, sea and air, supplementing the united nations convention against transnational organized crime* (2000), and to the third *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* (1990).

6. Politicization of migration

In the area of Polish political science a need to conduct research on the politicization of migration issues has been recently indicated by Magdalena Lesinska. In general terms, politicization is defined as the process in which a social phenomenon gains the status of a political issue, and in this way becomes the object of not only the state legislation, but also of a broad debate conducted in the public and political sphere. In a so formulated process, in its early phase the following stages can be identified: the recognition of immigrants as a group, which later becomes the subject of a public debate (not infrequently it is initiated in the conditions of the economic crisis), which in turn leads to a situation in which the immigration issue becomes one of the main topics of interest of politicians, political parties and election campaigns. Comparative studies, with their focus on the conditions which initiate the process of politicization of migration and its progress in various immigration countries are of particularly high cognitive potential in this area [Lesinska, 2011: 16]. What plays an important role here is the attempt to find answers to questions such as: in what way is the political discourse on migration conducted?, what entities participate in it?, what kind of rhetoric dominates it?, what conclusions and generalizations on migration and migrants are formulated? etc.

7. Migration in the European Union

Migration policy making on the supranational level and the institutionalization of the process, as well as accompanying harmonization and the Europeanization of migration policies of individual countries became one of the stimulants for political scientists' interest in migration issues. As noted by Magdalena Lesinska: „Development of the European migration regime, which relies on the legislation of the European Union and the Schengen area, is a unique geopolitical phenomenon without precedent. Not surprisingly, the attempt to manage migration processes within the Community as well as the inflows from outside its borders, which was taken within the framework of the EU has become a natural subject for analysis in the context of political science „[Lesinska, 2011: 4]. The migration crisis, which took place in the summer of 2015 proved that uncontrolled migration flows may pose one of the most important threats to the efficient functioning of the European Union. At the same time it perfectly illustrates how difficult it is to reconcile national and the Community interests in some areas.

Obviously, the list of issues referred to above is not exhaustive. It only presents the areas which seem the most cognitively relevant from the point of view of political science.

In the 20th and early 21st century migration gained the status of one of the most important social and political phenomena, affecting both the functioning of individual states and the entire international order. Therefore, the contemporary migration is an essential research issue in humanities and social sciences as well as in economic sciences. However, for many years, it was, above all, economics and sociology that, with the use of classical for both disciplines theories, led the way in terms of descriptions and explanations of migration processes. Importantly, in line with the subject matter of these disciplines in the conducted research little attention was paid to the state. The state should be yet considered one of the most important actors involved in migration flows (as an object affected by migration processes and a structure significantly affecting these processes itself at the same time). Undoubtedly, the issue of migration currently occupies an important place in the political sphere of many countries, and thus appears as a natural area for the study within political science. However, political science, as a relatively young field of knowledge, for long time did not show a greater interest in population movements and their influence on politics. It is only quite recently that the demand for the inclusion of these issues in the mainstream of scientific inquiry has been formulated and comprehensive studies begun to be conducted. Therefore, in comparison with other disciplines dealing with migration, political science has a lot to catch up, especially in the field of theory and methodology. Nonetheless, political science research can significantly enrich interdisciplinary knowledge on migration in the modern world. Political science approach is characterised by a high cognitive potential in this area.

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