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Crossing the fringes of Europe:
Transit migration in
the EU's neighbourhood

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Abstract:

It has been observed that migrants often cross a range of countries before reaching their final destination in Europe. This phenomenon is called transit migration, migrants are increasingly risking their lives when moving in this way. Because of fear over illegal immigration and for humanitarian reasons transit migration has become a cause of concern for public and policy alike. This paper looks at the emergence of the concept and surveys some empirical studies. It examines the discursive use of the idea, its politicised character and blurred nature, and highlights some methodological difficulties in studying transit migration. Finally, some human rights and policy implications will be raised.

Key Words:

Transit migration, forced migration, irregular migration, EU migration policy, migration discourse

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'Turkey detains 41 illegal refugees trying to cross into Greece' (Agence France Presse 1997).

'Twenty Kurds from Turkey, Iraqis and Pakistanis were arrested in Kiev [on their way] to Slovakia and then to Germany' (Prima News Agency 2004).

'Mohammed ...started a journey, that lasted more than two years and spanned countries like Senegal, Mali, Guinea Bissau, Niger, Mauritania and Algeria. ... [He was] caught by Moroccan police while trying to scale the ...fence between Morocco and Ceuta' (UNHCR 2006a).

Migrants and refugees seem increasingly willing to risk the consequences of hazardous journeys and to follow dangerous paths to reach EU territory. Since the early 1990s migrants from distant countries have been noted in countries neighbouring the EU, such as Morocco, Turkey and Ukraine. It is assumed that many are heading for Europe, and therefore they are dubbed 'transit migrants'. From a human rights perspective, as well as from the point of view of European interests, they have become a cause for concern. NGOs and civil society activists either argue that migrants who turn to dangerous routes or who are stranded in third countries are a direct consequence of EU immigration restrictions - which should consequently be lifted - or they call for improving legal and social conditions in the countries of current residence. EU agencies and national governments in contrast aim to stop problematic and unwanted migration and put pressure on transit countries – a strategy becoming known as the internationalisation, or externalisation of EU migration policies - to prevent migrants from crossing their territories on their way north and west. Within such an environment the concept of transit migration is torn between scientific clarity and popular misconception, and has become as blurred as it is politicised.

This paper deals with the many complexities and controversies of the concept of transit migration. First, it surveys the political environment which brought about the concept; second, it looks at the history of the idea of transit migration; third, it sketches the political discourses and looks at the academic landscape within which the notion has developed; fourth, it identifies causes and conditions of transit migration; fifth, it discusses some methodological and analytical pitfalls and difficulties of research of transit migration; and sixth, it explores political responses to transit migration. This exercise, by challenging some problematic practices of application of the concept, will help to sharpen the category of transit migration and to encourage and improve further research.

The Emergence of the Concept of Transit Migration

Transit migration has become of increasing concern for the European Union, and all other countries affected. Since the early 1990, numerous conferences and policy documents are devoted to issues of transit migration. Unfortunately, despite widespread deployment of the

concept by multilateral and intergovernmental agencies no adequate or commonly agreed definition seems to be available. Instead, the concept appears to be as politicised as it is blurred; its emergence is not free from political motivation, and its use is often politically loaded, if not negatively connoted. The way it is applied by some international and intergovernmental organisations is often grossly simplifying if not misleading. This section first analyses the political discourse and second sketches the scientific efforts to understand continuing and transiting migration.

Transit Migration - politicised concepts, blurred definitions

The concept of 'transit migration' seems to have entered the migration policy discourse during the early 1990s (UN 1993; IOM 1994a, b, c, d, e). Since then, it has become increasingly applied if not popular. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 1994, following a UN conference in 1993 on the same topic, urged its member states through a series of papers to recognise transit migration as an important pattern in international migration, and in particular in irregular and asylum migration. Widgren (1995), director of International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), also warned that at the height of the European asylum panic most asylum seekers were transiting CEE countries. In 1998, a strategy paper of the then Austrian presidency of the Council of the European Union emphasised (not for the first time) the importance of transit migration and transit countries. This was followed by six action plans on Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Iraq, Albania, Somalia and Morocco, drafted by the High Level Working Group on Asylum and Migration (HLWG) in 1999. More recently, the Ministerial Conference of the 5+5 Dialogue on Migration in the Western Mediterranean (2001) reemphasised the necessity of 'joint management of the phenomenon'. Moreover, UNHCR (2001), for example, studying the migration situation in Bosnia Herzegovina, alerted authorities about the relatively recently emerging phenomenon of transit migration in post-conflict Balkan countries. The Council of Europe has also been engaged in related conferences and processes, for example through its regional conference on Migrants in Transit Countries in 2004, thereby raising attention and encouraging national authorities to respond. That was a direct result of an earlier publication (Council of Europe 2002: part I) emphasising that 'perhaps the most salient migration phenomenon currently affecting Central and Eastern Europe is that of transit migrants.' Meanwhile, the 'Söderköping process', a 'Cross-Border Co-Operation Process' on migration matters, has been launched under the auspices of the Swedish government, bringing together Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine. Part of this is the East-Central European Cross-Border Co-operation Enhancement Process targeting Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova in

order to 'tackle the problems of irregular transit migration and asylum problems' (General Directors' Immigration Conference 2001). Finally, even at International Monetary Fund (Carstens 2005) and World Bank (2006) level, transit migration and the economy of transit countries is on the agenda.

Despite significant political concern, there does not exist a category or definition for transit migration in international policy or international law. Instead, such a definition has entered into political discourse by custom, so it seems. One of the earliest definitions was offered by UN/ECE (1993: 7), whereby transit migration is 'migration in one country with the intention of seeking the possibility there to emigrate to another country as the country of final destination'. The Assembly of Inter-Parliamentary Union in Geneva (2005: 4) assures that 'the international community has a universally accepted definition of migrants in transit, which reads: "transit migrants are defined as aliens who stay in the country for some period of time while seeking to migrate permanently to another country".' The only evidence given for the alleged 'universal acceptance' is an IOM publication. That is hardly convincing, in particular given the fact that it was the IOM who popularised the concept. Meanwhile, IOM (2004: 66) has refined their definition as follows: transit is a 'stopover of passage, of varying length, while travelling between two or more countries, either incidental to continuous transportation, or for the purpose of changing planes or joining an ongoing flight or other mode of transport'. IOM also defines transit migrants as 'refugees awaiting resettlement' (ibid: 53). Other sources define transit migrants as 'people who enter the territory of a state in order to travel on to another' (Council of Europe 2002: part I), 'a short-term temporary stay of a migrant on his/her way from a country of origin to a country of destination' (Ivakhniouk 2004: 6), or 'the stage between emigration and settlement' (Papadopoulou 2005: 2). Icdygu (1995) emphasises the intention of transit migrants which lies in the continuation of their journey, and Tapia (2004) defines the transit migrant as a person 'who is there, but who does not want to be there'.

Further confusing is that transit migration is often identified with irregular migration and illegal employment and with human smuggling, trafficking and organised crime. Several sources insist that transit migration is often irregular or illegal. For example, For example, a UN publication identifies transit migration with 'flows of irregular and illegal migrants from the Third World and from east European countries' UN/ECE (1993: 7) and stresses that transit migrants reach their destination 'by means that are partially, if not fully, illegal'. The parliamentary assembly of Council of Europe (2001, para 3) too emphasises that 'the two major characteristics of transit migration are its illicit nature and an elaborate criminal organisation'. Typical terms or descriptions include 'illegal transit migration', 'in general, transit

migrants travel in groups and use the services of traffickers' (Sipavicieno and Kanopiene 1997: 9) and 'illegal migration routes' (Bulletin Quotidien Europe 2006a). Some sources label specific countries as 'transit country for traffickers, smugglers and irregular migrants' (Zvizdovica 2001: 1). The International Centre for Migration Policy Development, an intergovernmental institution located in Vienna, states that 'the phenomenon of transit migration is mostly irregular' (ICMPD 2005a: 1). In their view the 'Dialog on Mediterranean Transit Migration' which they have initiated is a direct consequence of the aim to 'prevent irregular migration' (ICMPD 2005b).

Over the course of time, transit migration has turned into a political discourse. A Google search on 'transit migration' generates 30,900 hits, not many compared with other searches (forced migration for example, generates 933,000 hits). The search, which is somewhat disappointing because many hits seem to be self-referential, repeatedly points to the same limited number of publications, either by the IOM, the Council of Europe or a limited number of researchers and research projects. What becomes obvious though is that 'transit migration' has become a code for 'illegal immigration', as well as for ineligible asylum seekers, who according to the Dublin Convention (1990)ⁱ are supposed to make their claim in the first safe country instead of moving on. Accordingly, countries found to be transited by migrants are thought of as problematic (GDISC 2006). Some publications presented transit migration as yet another threat to Europe. For example, the IOM (1994a) report on transit migration in Hungary alleged that up to two million migrants who are living in Central Europe in fact want to move to the West, and that their number is continuing to grow. The following year Turkey was identified as a transit country: 'transit migration through Turkey can be viewed as one of the most common of all recently established mobility flows between Africa and Asia and countries of Europe. It has become clear that thousands of migrants from the developing world who enter Europe are using Turkey as a transit area on their way to their preferred destinations' (IOM 1995a: 4). Transit migration has also been associated with Central and Eastern Europe (since 1994), the Baltic republics (since 1994), with the Balkans (since 1999, the postwar period, see Zvizdovica 2000), some Caucasus republics (Azerbaijan 2003) and with Northern Africa, namely Morocco and Libya. High and implausible figures have recently circulated about millions of sub-Saharan African transit migrants gathering in northern Africa trying to move north.ⁱⁱ In this sense, 'transit migration' has to some extent become sort of a war cry directed at countries that are expected by European Union states to keep unwanted migration off European territories.

Some NGOs however, more concerned with the consequences of the introduction of what was dubbed 'Fortress Europe' than driven by fears that Europe would be flooded by

transit migrants also studied the situation of 'stranded migrants' in their 'involuntary waiting room' (Research Society Refuge and Migration, FFM 1996: 7, see also FFM 1997). This research, though of a non-scientific nature and more a pilot study, raised concerns about the adverse effect of increased migration controls on refugees, suffering at the hands of corrupt police and border guards and the lack of adequate provisions for refugees. Such practices, however, emphasise the negative experiences of transit migrants and instead of presenting them as a threat, as government sources tend to do, rather portray them as victims. The full picture of the lives of transit migrants, as well as their human agency has meanwhile been left in the dark.

Most of these interpretations and definitions are either particular narrow or rather vague (see also Cassarino and Fargue 2006 for this argument) and they are as confusing as incoherent. All this shows that what was once meant to be a clear-cut category, aiming to attract the attention of migration control agencies instead turns out to be a complex and migration phenomenon that requires deeper scrutiny.

Transit Migration in Academic Research

Historians of migration identified patterns of 'transit migration' long before it was called transit. Bade (2000: 151), for example, referred to Swedish observations whereby young women first moved internally from countryside and villages to larger towns and port cities, where they worked in order to acquire the necessary funds for paying the ship passage to America. He called that step-by-step migration. Studies on Turkish labour migrants in Germany frequently found that they had moved internally from village to city before deciding for international migration (Kleff 1984). Treibel (1990: 24) understood such movements as migration in stages. Indeed, development studies and urban studies have long been acutely aware of the link between rural-urban, hence internal migration, and international migration (e.g. Bilsborrow 1998). But because migration sociology suffers from a major bias - it is mostly concerned with international migration involving the crossing of international borders (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2003) - non-international movements, namely internal migration is of little interest and often left to development and urban studies. Thus, studies into international migration are liable to miss the link between internal (transit) migration and subsequent international migration. That may explain why a migration pattern which has for long been known to migration historians, geographers and development studies only entered the academic discourse of international migration when it began to directly characterise international movements.

Initially, academics were hesitant about responding to the IOM's call for research on 'transit migration'. In an interview Wallace (2004) describes how she has been approached by IOM and urged to contact a study on a topic which, at that time was considered, irrelevant. IOM 'said, "we want a study on transit migration", ... [but] international migration wasn't a topic for anybody in the Czech Republic because it had not really been a problem'. Whilst this example shows that the problematic interpretation IOM associates with transit migration was not initially shared by academics, it was nevertheless successful in triggering research. Surprisingly, once the series of IOM reports on transit migration were produced the topic faded away, with the exception of a report on Azerbaijan. Instead, trafficking in human beings appears to have become the dominant theme, and often it is found that issues of transit migration have become integrated into that thread (see for e.g. Stulhofer and Raboteg-Saric 2001).

Meanwhile, rigorous scientific research has been conducted or is in progress. In a strict academic sense the concept of 'transit migration' has either been applied as a migration pattern, while 'transit migrants' has been used as a migration typology and 'transit countries' as a political science category. Meanwhile, case studies have been conducted focussing on Iranians (Kaytaz 2006), Iraqis (Danis et al. 2006) and West Africans (Brewer and Yükseder 2005) in Turkey (Narli 2003, Yaghmaian 2005, Icduygu 2005), Kurds in Greece (Papadopoulou 2005), Somalis and Sudanese in Egypt (Roman 2006), Chinese in Russia (Ghelbras 2001), or Morocco (Haas 2005, Collyer 2006). A few examples of these recent findings will be highlighted.

Kaytaz studied a specific group of Iranian Christian refugees, who fled to Turkey where they were awaiting UNHCR decision and final resettlement to another country.ⁱⁱⁱ Her sample illustrates a pattern whereby refugees are kept in transit by law, because Turkey applies the original geographical limitation of the Refugee Convention whereby refugees from non-European countries are not accepted for settlement in Turkey but must be resettled. Refugee status determination can take anything between six month to three years, resulting in an unplanned and long stay in Turkey. For legal, but also for social reasons, Turkey represents a hostile environment for this group of migrants. As a consequence, migrants transiting Turkey may not only do so by choice but also out of despair and of necessity. However, only a fraction of the 15 million refugees worldwide are assisted by UNHCR in moving to their final destination through such programmes. These are of only minor relevance to transit migration (2000: 39,272, 2001: 33,098, 2002: 21,032, 2003: 29,098, see UNHCR 2006b). On the other hand, Danis et al. (2006) find that even under the most adverse conditions Iraqi, Afghan and Maghrebi migrants in Istanbul, who would be considered as transit migrants by many other

authors instead managed some 'unofficial integration' into the economic sphere and the housing market.

Brewer and Yükseder (2005: 8) found that the average stay of African refugees in Turkey, before being considered for resettlement, is two to three years. Some only became (transit) migrants by accident after they were abandoned or dumped by human smugglers who were supposed to bring them to Greece or Italy. Rejected asylum seekers alternatively try irregular strategies to leave the country. Their length of stay in their transit country depends on support by NGOs, on social capital and help through networks, or their success in accumulating funds to pay for the often clandestine passage to Europe or indeed for return. Different groups seem to have different levels of success. Africans in general and East Africans in particular seem to face the greatest difficulties and because opportunities are scarce they are 'stuck' (Brewer and Yükseder 2006: 16). Comparison with earlier findings (IOM 1995a), according to which Africans spend an average of 13 months in Turkey before identifying ways out, raises the question for the reasons for these changes. It might be assumed that this is related to tightened regimes in the EU.

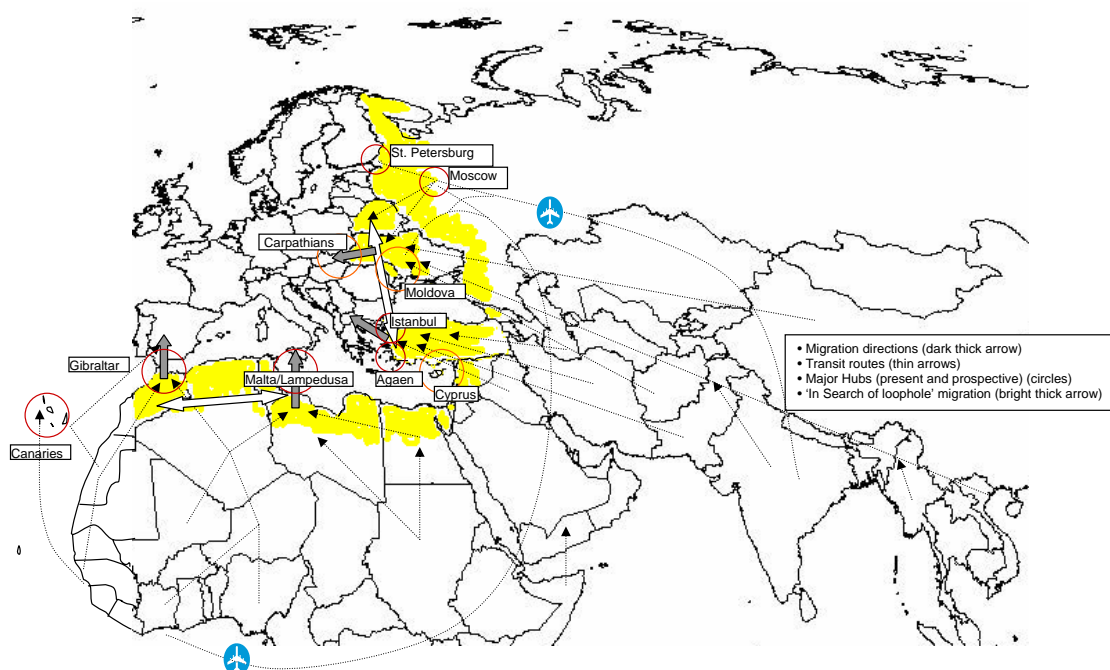
It is odd, however, that Roman (2006) interprets refugees who have been staying in Egypt for 10 or 12 years, and who, because of emerging difficulties, have developed aspirations to move to Europe or the US as transit migrants. It is equally irritating to define countries as transit countries even though the overwhelming majority of people arriving are actually immigrants, either labour migrants or refugees. Roman (2006) for example identifies Egypt a transit country for Sudanese even though only a very small proportion of arriving migrants move on whilst the majority stays in Sudan. Equal criticism applies to Boubakri (2004), who calls Libya a transit country. Whilst Libya hosts 1.2-1.8 million migrants (INJEP 2002), mostly labour migrants from sub-Saharan countries, only a few actually transited the country to Europe. For example, only 1,300 migrants arriving in Malta annually seem to have departed from Libya (Washington Times, 26.12.2004). In 2004, only 10,000 migrants arrived at Italian shores, not all of them departed from Libya, but also from Turkey and Tunisia. These few do not justify labelling a country a transit country whilst in fact it is an immigration country. Others have noted that in some countries, for example the Czech Republic, 'the period of transit migration is definitely the song of the past' (Topinka 2005: 5). Equally, Central and Eastern European countries previously understood as transit countries for refugees, have meanwhile adopted adequate policies and consequently turned into refugees hosting countries (Druke 2004: 120). Instead, it is acknowledged that what was once perceived as transit migration increasingly turns out to be immigration, respectively that former transit countries are in fact becoming immigration countries.

These works show that it has become obvious that ‘being in transit’ is a stage of changing choice-making, of adaptations to given environments and of responses to the opportunity structures found in the countries, in which migrants stay for some time. Decisions made seem to be related to the nature of networks, to which migrants attach themselves, if at all, and the information circulating within these networks but also to the information and services available on the market. Often, it seems, the final destination is not necessarily determined before a migrants sets off but arises out of the choices that are available, and affordable, in the country of temporary stay, and often if may be irregular migration services, in other words, smugglers, who determine the country of final destination (see for e.g. Koser 1997).

Causes and Characteristics of Transit Migrations

This section is summarising the causes and characteristics of transit migration as identified in the literature. From this constantly changing directions and transformations in the type of migration can be noted. Finally, different patterns of conditions prompting transit migration can be identified.

Map: Illustration of transit migration on the fringes of the European Union, as it occurs from the available publications



Transit migration is conventionally explained in terms of the attractions of rich western countries. Studies that look at the link between transit migration, human smuggling and trafficking suggest that transit migration is explained by the relative ease with which some

countries can be entered and transited in order to reach another (Futo et al. 2005). 'Porous borders', lax entry controls and liberal visa regulations^{iv} and 'geographic position' at the crossroads between east and west are the most frequently cited conditions for transit migration (e.g. IOM 1995a, IOM 2003, Narli 2003). This implies that the absence of efficient border and internal controls, or the corruption of authorities, invite (irregular) transit migration. Sometimes, transit migration is indeed facilitated by the international policy framework, namely refugee resettlement arrangements. For example, it has been found that Iranian refugees in Turkey deliberately and strategically apply for asylum, await decision and count on being resettled to their final destination (Kaytaz 2006). In other instances, this was maybe not strategically planned but still the final result (Roman 2005). Additionally, some research found that transit migration can also be caused by lack of legal opportunities in the first country of arrival. Jordan and Düvell (2002) refer to Kurdish refugees in Greece, who after struggling to survive whilst trying to regularize their position or obtaining refugee status finally gave up hope and moved on to the UK. Equally, the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (2005) relates irregular transit migration through Turkey to the lack of an efficient asylum procedure. Roman (2006: 7) recently found that migration of refugees from Sudan and Somalia to Egypt became transit migrants because of 'lack of local integration prospects'. The same could be hypothesized for Turkey where, because most categories of migrants are refused permission to work (and indeed a proper immigration status) there are few incentives for migrants to stay which prompts them to search for alternative destinations. Unwelcoming environments, in particular when characterized by additional hostility such as discrimination, racism, racial violence and police harassment (as in the case of Africans in Istanbul, see Brewer and Yükseder 2006) certainly play their part in preventing migrants to settle down and instead provoke them to move on. Other examples, however, show, that even where host societies are largely 'tolerant and hospitable', as it is said to be the case in Azerbaijan (IOM 2003: 11) transit migration has been observed. In the quoted case, the major reason is felt to be lack of economic opportunities.

Transit migration does not seem to follow an orderly journey 'from country a through country b to country c' pattern, neither does it involve a constant variety of countries. Instead, transit flows seem to constantly change paths, points of departure and arrival; frequently, transit migrants seem to be blown of course, respond to new opportunities or quickly respond to new or increasing control policies. For example, during the mid 1990s it was observed that transit migrants, because of increasing controls along the Polish-Ukraine borders moved south through Moldova, Romania and Hungary trying to find a loophole into the EU (FFM 1996). It has recently been reported that new restrictive measures in Spain, initially aimed at

movements across the Straits of Gibraltar, forced would-be migrants from sub-Saharan countries to depart from the Moroccan Atlantic coast and cross over to the Canary Islands. Once controls have been intensified, transit migrants then began to use Mauritania as a stepping stone and take a ship from there (German Foreign Policy 2006). And since that is becoming increasingly difficult, because of coordinated EU efforts to stop it, some boats seem to leave from as far as Senegal, moving north along the coast of north-western Africa before heading towards the Atlantic Ocean in an attempt to reach the Canary Islands from the south (Wandler 26/5/2006). Another emerging stepping stone could be Cyprus: close to Middle East crises regions, accessible from the Eurasian continent and characterised by a relatively open border between Turkish Republic of Cyprus and EU Greek-Cyprus, it seems an obvious point of attraction.

Transit migration has been frequently observed in countries of the former eastern bloc, such as Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Czech Republic. It has also been found that in Russia, for example, migrants from neighbouring countries which are former Soviet republics tend to be immigrants whilst migrants from countries further away and with no cultural links with Russia tend to be transit migrants (Krassinets 1998: 7). With respect to present migration to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) it seems to be forgotten if not ignored that the USSR and other countries of the eastern Bloc were integrated into a specific system of international relations. These were based upon ideas of socialist and international friendship linking foreign policy, development aid and migration politics. Migration had been facilitated for many decades through students' exchange programmes and labour recruitment schemes. For example, Somalis have been trained and educated in Romania, Afghans and Indians in Russia and Vietnamese in Poland. Present migration, including transit migration, in CEE and CIS countries must be analysed with respect to these past movements. It has been found, for instance, that pre-transformation immigrants seem to have been taken by surprise by the sudden political changes at the end of the 1980s. As a consequence of such transformations they were often deprived of their privileged status, were prevented from finishing their studies and were exempted from housing and benefits (see FFM 1996). Such changes forced them to either return to their country of origin or try their luck in another country not affected by such transformations, hence the West. In such cases they have been perceived as transit migrants. But there are also recent generations of migrants (whether or not they are actually in transit remains disputed) who only migrated to CEE and CIS countries after the collapse of the eastern bloc. It could be hypothesised that they could be former students returning to their country of studies, for example because they could still have contacts with their previous indigenous social networks. Or they could be migrants

attracted by compatriots, hence the previous group of labour or student immigrants who are still in the country and who trigger a network effect. Analysis of whether patterns of repeated migration, specific network effects, or even migration systems have emerged that could help to explain third world migration, including transit migration in such countries, is long overdue.

Three major conditions, one economic, one social, the other political, can be identified that result in transit migration. Migrants who wish to move from A to C may not have the financial means to do so, but they may have the means to travel to a country which is somewhere on the way to their final destination. They therefore travel to country B, hoping that there they will be able to acquire further funds that will allow them to move on to their final destination. The same may apply to migrants who feel they lack the social or even human capital to move straight to their final destination and instead try and move to a country near to their final destination where they have some social capital and where they hope to build up the social, and possibly also human capital that will enable them to move on to their final destination. Migrants who wish to move from A to C may find that their final destination is blocked by immigration regulations, which restrict them from moving there straight away, e.g. booking a flight or bus to their final destination. Alternatively, it might be possible to reach country B from where they hope to reach their final destination. Such a country might either be a neighbouring country or any other country from where it is deemed possible to reach their final destination. This is because such countries offer specific conditions, such as liberal travel regulations with the country of final destination, lax border controls or porous borders, black market for visa, smuggling networks or corrupt authorities from whom to buy visa.

There seem to be a certain class element involved in transit migration. Those who have sufficient financial resources may simply book a flight to their final destination, and because they must be able to prove that they are bona fide tourists or businessmen - even though their purpose may be economic and their intention may be (temporary and irregular) immigration - they need to be able to prove that they have savings, a job, house etc. to convince the immigration officials of their honest intentions. Those who have some financial resources, but may not be able to convince immigration officials of their honest intentions, may instead fly straight to a country close to their final destination. For example, they could fly from Nigeria to Kyiv and then try to move on. And there might be those with few resources who can only afford the cheapest transportation, such as busses or rides on the back of lorries and who need to travel through a range of countries toward their intended destination. The latter two may even be compelled to basically work their way towards their final destination by making money all along their journey in order to finance it. Hence they will stay for longer periods in some transit countries.

Migrations associated with transit movements often seem to display the same determinants that characterize migration in general. Perceived transit migrants originate from neighbouring countries, they often have knowledge of the (transit) countries' languages, they have access to some networks, hence some social capital in these countries. For example, the IOM report on Azerbaijan (2003) found that the overwhelming majority were from neighbouring countries (Russia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran), more than half of their interviewees spoke some Azeri, and 13 per cent had personal ties. Another report on Turkey (IOM 1995a) found that the majority of transit migrants were from Iran and Iraq (often of Kurdish or ethnic Turkish background), and from countries that have some historical or religious links with Turkey, such as Bosnia. Two-thirds were Muslim, more than a third spoke either Turkish or Kurdish, and 20 percent, respectively 33 per cent referred to family or friends. In both cases, transit migration in Azerbaijan and in Turkey, migration systems as well as network effect seem to partially explain such movements.

A Complex and Problematic Concept

This section will analyse the manifold epistemological, methodological and empirical difficulties in researching patterns of continuous, repeated and multiple migration involving more than two countries. Some aspects shall be discussed in greater depth.

There is a certain and disturbing bias attached to the transit concept. This is the assumption that migrants from low-income countries who are found in, for example, a middle-income country, such as Russia, Ukraine or Turkey, are inclined to move on to high-income countries. This assumption seems to be informed by economic modelling, based upon the Todaro (1969) model, which suggests that migrants move to the destination which offers the highest return for their labour. Opposing this assumption is the fact that most migrants instead move to neighbouring or nearby destinations, which are linked through regional migration systems (Düvell 2006). Instead of striving for maximum income improvement, as Todaro suggests, any improvement seems to serve as an incentive, whilst distance, language and culture, lack of social and human capital and general risk averseness serve as disincentives for moving to a high-income but distant country.

A further bias is related to the assumption that it is high-income countries that are perceived logical destinations. The literature usually refers to second or third world countries as transit countries whereas in fact first world countries may well also serve as transit countries. For instance, Italy, Spain and Greece have been suspected by other European governments of tolerating and encouraging transit migration to countries further north, whilst Baganha et al. (2004: 28) found that Ukrainians transit Germany and Austria on their way to

take up irregular employment in Portugal. In particular, policy documents, but also some academic literature, do not seem to apply the label of 'transit' to such cases. Instead, the soft touch/soft-underbelly metaphor (e.g. Hollifield 1994) is used to reveal lack of compliance with EU policy requirements. A second consequence of this bias results in a specific politics of migration research (Ratcliffe 2001) which constantly neglects studies on migration and integration in developing countries, with some exceptions in Africa. Therefore, studies in immigrant integration in countries such as Turkey or Ukraine are missing. Instead it appears as if it is assumed that no migrant wants to stay anyway but intends to move on whilst in fact some settlement and subsequent integration can be observed (Danis et al. 2006).

In addition, there is a certain racial bias that seems to spawn investigations into transit migration. Reading through the available policy documents reveals that attention has often only been triggered by the appearance of unusual faces on the scene, such as Africans in Turkey, Afghans in Hungary or Somalis in Romania. Whilst migrants from neighbouring countries, often with shared ethnic or linguistic features, and often of clear refugee background have been common features in many countries – e.g. Iranians in Turkey – Black and Asian migrants were not.

Meanwhile, it can be observed that countries that have for some time been perceived as transit countries, such as the EU-8 countries⁴, but also Turkey and Ukraine are acknowledged to be also countries of immigration. There is some plausibility in assuming that this has to do with increasingly rigid migration controls, regulations and restrictions of western European countries which prevent migrants from moving further west and instead compel them to settle where they are (e.g. Oxfam 2005). There are, however, alternative explanations. Not only do EU-8 and other CEE countries display high growth rates, vacancies resulting from emigration and labour market demands caused by populations that are ageing at an even faster pace than in Western Europe, but they also have distinct bilateral relations with sending countries, in particular attracting students from many African and Asian countries. Thereby, specific migration channels have been introduced, which may well have developed into distinct migration networks and even systems. EU-8 countries are integrated into global migration movements, and into regional and intercontinental migration systems. Assuming that they cannot be countries of destination but must be transit countries, and assuming that immigration is to be solely explained by the 'stuck' effect does not seem justified (see for the case of Ukraine, Braichevska et al. 2004).

Moreover, it is striking to find that most 'transit migration routes', as for example identified by ICMPD, follow exactly the traditional trading and migratory paths in Europe, Africa and Central Asia. FFM (1996: 60), for example, argues that so-called transit routes in

southeast Europe, from Turkey through Greece and Bulgaria to Romania correspond with traditional trading routes. Some of ICMPD's maps look like exact copies of thousand-year-old cross-Saharan trading links, whilst other routes seem to duplicate the Eurasian Silk Road. These routes and their famous urban nodes, such as Istanbul and Baku, or Agades and Tamanrasset, as well as straits, such as those of Gibraltar and Sicily, serving as inter-continental bridges, have for hundreds of years represented the infrastructure for the migration of people, goods, culture and knowledge (Hoerder 2003). For example, the Silk Road has linked East and Central Asia with Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Europe. A thousand years ago, many of today's 'transit countries' were part of the Silk Road system, such as Azerbaijan, Turkey and Ukraine, as was the Caspian Sea, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Meanwhile, all relevant governments are involved in enhancing this traditional infrastructure and complement it with adequate roads and rails (see Iranian Daily 2004). By taking a historical perspective, it is apparent that transit migration, transit countries and transit cities are not new features. Instead it could be hypothesised that 'transit migration' is a revival of some traditional patterns and paths. The major difference now seems to be the character of the borders that cut across such paths. Only because of the emergence of the modern nation state and its implementation in regions such as Central Asia and the Balkans has transit migration through diverse nation states become an issue whilst simultaneously the precondition for its control – national borders, national immigration legislation, national border control agencies - have been introduced.

A problematic dividing line to draw is that between transit migration and repeated, respectively multiple migration. This seems to be the problem with some authors who interpret migrants who move on to another country as 'transit' even after a long stay in their first host country (e.g. Roman 2006). In contrast, diverse evidence-based and inter-related migration theories – the theory on cumulative causation, culture of migration and accumulation of migration experiences (see DaVanzo 1983, Massey and Zenteno 1999) have found that an individual that has migrated once, and who has improved his/her human and social capital, develops a higher propensity to migrate again. 'Whatever the initial reasons for migration, once someone has lived and worked in a foreign setting, he or she is no longer the same person'. They develop new wants, 'learn how to manage life in a foreign setting', 'the more someone migrates, the more he or she is likely to continue migrating and the longer he or she will stay abroad, yielding a self-sustaining process of human capital accumulation that produces more trips of longer duration' (Massey and Zenteno 2001: 5328-29). On the other hand, as it has been observed in Turkey, repeated migration may be the consequence of frustrated experiences in the first country of destination, where lack of opportunities may

result in considering moving on to more promising destinations (McAnailly Burkey 1997). The distinction seems to be that repeated migrants who move on to another country did not intend to do so in the first instance but only developed such an aspiration whilst staying in their first host country. It is unconvincing to define a migrant as in transit retrospectively, hence to mark periods in their life as transitory which lie before the point of time at which the decision to move on has been made. Does that mean that in contrast, a migrant who would have the aspiration to move on to another country from the day s/he arrived in their first host country could be justifiably understood as a transit migrant? (see below).

Not only is there another problematic dividing line between transit migration, irregular migration, smuggling and trafficking, also the relevance of transit migration for irregular migration is grossly overestimated. On the one hand, as it has been shown above, transit migration is frequently associated with irregular migration, sometimes referred to as 'illegal transit migration' (Sipavicieno and Kanopiene 1997: 9). By introducing a synthetic expression, which is not supported by a respective legal definition it is left unclear what exactly the unlawful aspect is, whether it is illegal entry, illegal stay in the present country of residence, illegal exit, or whether it is illegal border crossing. On the other hand, IOM studies on Turkey and Hungary imply that large numbers of migrants had gathered in these countries to illegally cross the borders to the west, vice versa, the implication is that irregular immigrants in EU countries did arrive via illegal transit migration. Instead, research has shown that the overwhelming majority of irregular immigrants in the EU have entered legally, on some sort of a visa, and then overstayed (Düvell 2005a). And recent publications show that only ten per cent of the irregular migrants' population in Italy arrived by boat (government figures quoted in Cuttitta 2005), implying that they departed from or transited another non EU-Mediterranean country.

Furthermore, there is considerable overlap, if not confusion, of transit migration with asylum migration and with refugee resettlement, and with irregular migration and trafficking. Empirically, it has been found that migrants who are restricted from moving to Europe legally and who therefore turn to the services of human smugglers or fall into the hand of traffickers are often taken through a range of countries (e.g. Mavris 2002; Futo et al. 2005). Often they have to acquire further funds in order to finance their journey and to pay consecutive smugglers in order to reach their next stage. With respect to asylum, Papadopoulou (2005) challenges the separation of asylum and migration, since both are embedded in different discourses and policy contexts, whilst in fact there are common characteristics. In particular transit migration seems to be consisting of both (see Papadopoulou 2005, Kaytaz 2006).

There are two very different aspects that lead researchers to the application of the concept of transit migration. Either (A) a person who is found in a given country is indeed transiting this country and in fact continues the journey, or (B) a person found in a given country only intends to transit this country and plans to move on to a final destination. Whilst (A) is a matter of fact, (B) is an account given by an interviewee expressing an intention or maybe not more than a dream. That leads to considerable methodological concerns. As yet, most research seems to have been conducted in what are perceived the transit countries. Consequently, the interviewees have not been met at the supposed end of their migration trajectory but somewhere in-between a supposedly longer migration project. Or perhaps not! At least such interviews do not provide satisfying evidence for the concept of transit migration. What they reveal instead is a state of mind, a mentally transitory process maybe. But is that not similar to findings related to the concept of return migration where it was found that, for example, guestworkers in Germany or Asian labour migrants in the UK, dreamed of a return to Turkey or Pakistan, even after having spend most of their live in Germany or England? Return rather became a 'myth' (Kayser 1975, Anwar 1979, Düvell 2006) than a realistic option. No one would have concluded that individuals holding on to such a myth are in fact return migrants. Could it not be that the idea of being in transit and that the intention to move on to the shinier destinations in Western Europe or the US represents a similar myth? Could it not be that, for example, that the 70 per cent of migrants who were interviewed by IOM (1994a) in Hungary and who explained that they want to move west were voicing a dream rather than having concrete plans? And going a little further along this line, the principal concern is whether questions for migration aspirations manage to avoid being suggestive. In any case can the realisability of such accounts not be taken for granted.

Another set of literature is based upon an equally incomplete and biased set of data. For instance, Koser (1997), Robinson and Segrott (2002) and Gilbert and Koser (2004) studied asylum seekers in the UK in order to identify the reasons, such as social networks, that explain why these migrants have chosen the UK and how they have managed to come there, often passing through other countries. These findings, however, only build upon those migrants who successfully made it to the UK, hence those whose trajectories can be retrospectively interpreted as transit migration. Such a research design, based on migrants in the host country inevitably misses those who were unsuccessful and who wanted to move on but were stranded in a third country. Another doubt stems from the fact that the context of decision-making cannot be accurately conveyed in course of such post hoc narratives, as Kaytaz (2006) rightly criticizes. The respondents' reconstruction of their transitory period and related decision making rather reflect what the individual remembers and believes was going on but not what

actually was happening. Literature demonstrates that people making post-hoc narrative accounts of the thinking that they believed informed behaviour, instead were driven by factors outside their awareness (Nisbett and Wilson, 1977).

Finally, there is a set of related questions that illustrate the difficulties with the definition of the concept. How long, or short, is transit supposed to last to be interpreted as transit migration? After which length of stay does 'transit' turn into immigration or temporary migration? Is a highly skilled IT worker, doing a 12-month job in the UK and after that intending to move on to the US a transit migrant or is s/he not? Where to draw the line between transit migration, repeated migration and even global mobility? Are migrants who are staying in one country for several years but still insist that they intend to reach a final other destination are really transit migrants? Would the discourse not be better advised to distinguish between actual transit migration and mental transit?

To sum up this discussion and in order to justify the application of the concept of transit migration to given migration patterns and intentions certain conditions should be met:

- A person has the clear intention to move to a country of destination via a transit country.
- This clear intention existed prior to departure from the country of origin.
- A person has the clear intention to move on from the country of his/her present stay to a final destination.
- A person is taking concrete steps to realize this aspiration, e.g. making savings, or otherwise preparing for the journey.
- A person has as a matter of fact arrived and settled at the final destination by transiting another country.

Transit Migration and Migration Politics

It has been shown that transit migration was pushed onto the international migration policy agenda between 1993 and 1995. A new key word, a war cry, was born alarming public and policy justifying yet another round of measures to combat unwanted migration. The conflict over transit migration culminated in autumn 2004, when the Italian authorities in a dramatic move returned more than thousand irregular transit migrants back to their point of departure, Libya. It was a panic response executed in the absence of an adequate policy framework, criticised by a European Parliament's committee and in breach of international obligations, namely the Refugee Convention (see Andrijasevic 2006, for this case). Meanwhile,

'illegal transit immigration' has been identified a joint concern pushing previously alienated governments into a new alliance.

The politics of transit migration

Over the course of time, transit migration has become an issue within diverse policy arenas. These include the EU accession processes, European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the Barcelona process, the Mediterranean 5+5 Dialogue, the inter-governmental Dialogue on Transit Migration, the Transit and Irregular Migration Management in Libya (TRIM) project^{vi}, numerous bilateral readmission agreements between receiving, transit, and sending countries. Also diverse governmental, intergovernmental and multilateral agencies such as the US State Department, the International Organization for Migration, ICMPD and UNHCR have been responding to the perceived challenges of transit migration.

As already suggested, it was the International Organization for Migration (IOM), an inter-governmental, non-UN organization, which played a crucial role in pushing transit migration onto the international policy agenda. By its mandate, IOM acts on behalf of national governments. However, as has recently been analysed, IOM is successively leaving behind such restrictions, and by using its discretion, engages in pro-active policy initiatives (Düvell 2005b: 39). Consequently, some transit migration reports have been conducted triggered by the organization's own concerns (IOM 1995a: 4). Others, however, have been funded by perceived receiving countries, as for example, the Netherlands funding the report on Azerbaijan. With its many field offices and their Migration Information Programme (MIP), defined in one of their publications as representing a 'migration alert' function (IOM 1995b: 1), IOM is much closer to migration movements than a national government can ever be. They interpret their role and tasks as 'gathering information that will help government officials ... to strengthen their efforts to monitor and manage migration processes' (IOM 2003: 11). In this context, 'managing migration', as it has been analysed elsewhere, often turns out to be a euphemism for another conventional set of migration controls and restriction politics (Düvell 2005b). These ambitions have been put into practise through a series of country reports within the IOM's Migration Information Programme. Alarming high figures (or was it alarmism) were published by IOM. For example, in 1993, IOM claimed that 100,000 to 140,000 transit migrants had entered Czech Republic, 100,000 Poland (UPI 1994, according to IOM information), and another 60,000 Romania (IOM 1993: 8) implying that a migrant wave had been 'soaring' on the eastern borders of the European Union (UPI 1994). The following year, IOM claimed that a 'wave of Afghan migrants was heading for western Europe' (IOM 1995b: 2) whilst the IOM's report on

Turkey (1995a: 5) refers to 'masses from the South and East'. More recently, figures on Mediterranean transit migration have been comparably moderate, suggesting that 35,000 sub-Saharan Africans annually may be involved (ICMPD 2004: 8).

Another important European intergovernmental agency involved in policing transit migration is the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in Vienna, created by the Swiss and Austrian governments in 1993. Following the success of the Budapest process, a policy process coordinating efforts to improve borders controls, the Mediterranean Transit Migration Dialogue was set up in 2003. Governments concerned are invited to enhance the fight against illegal migration transiting the EU's Mediterranean neighbours (see ICMPD 2005b). The initiative is concerned with operational matters and intelligence aspects: routes and criminal activities are identified, intelligence exchanged, training provided and technical equipment shared amongst participants.

European governments and EU agencies have included measures targeting transit migration in a range of policies. Initially, concerns have been associated with candidate countries, with the EU-8 and the remaining two accession countries (Romania and Bulgaria). For example, the Romanian government, in order to satisfy EU policy expectations, claimed 'a significant reduction of transit migration from third countries through Romanian territory' (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1999). Combating irregular migration, often of nationals from distant countries who are transiting Mediterranean countries, is at the forefront of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the Barcelona process (Lutterbeck 2006: 70). Recent emergency measures aiming to curb unwanted migration to Spain, and specifically the Canary Islands, that departs from Morocco, increasingly Mauritania and even Senegal and involves mostly sub-Saharan migrants, illustrate that such measures basically target transit migrants aiming to leave the transit country (Bulletin Quotidien Europe 2006a). Instead, their return to the countries of origin is organised, namely to Senegal and Mali. This has been jointly arranged by EU agencies and is funded by the Argo programme and the European Refugee Fund. Libya has been another country integrated into such policies, and the EU is considering including EU-Libya relations in its European Neighbourhood Programme (ENP) and drafting an accompanying action plan (ibid. 2006b). European Neighbourhood Policies (see Guild 2005, for a detailed analysis) aims to improve the EU neighbouring states' capacity to control and restrict migration to and (the main worry) through these countries. Negotiations have as yet been conducted with Moldova, Morocco, Tunisia and Ukraine (Azerbaijan and Georgia are also on the list), to name the migration relevant countries. For example, the EU-Ukraine Action Plan on Justice and Home Affairs in 2001 and the EU-Ukraine Action Plan of 2004 are aiming at improvements in such affairs (see also Zhyznomirska 2006).

The transit migration discourse, as it came to life during the early 1990s, seemed to have coincided with European efforts to negotiate specific return, deportation and readmission policies with all its non-EU neighbours. Furthermore, carrier sanctions were introduced, obliging airlines, bus operators and shipping lines to return illegitimate migrants to their point of departure. Finally, the Dublin Convention was agreed, obliging refugees to apply for asylum in their first safe country. Thereby, refugees have been obliged to stay in their transit countries, whilst transit countries have been obliged to readmit transit migrants. Bosbach (2006), a leading figure of the conservative party in Germany (CDU) confirms that, 'we must also integrate countries of origin and transit. They must help to contain refugee flows and they must be obliged to readmit their own nationals. There is no other way than putting pressure on these countries. And money'. It has been confirmed that countries, as for instance Turkey, 'came under massive pressure from a number of EU member countries to curb ... transit migration' (Apap et al 2004: 19). All these measures represent cornerstones of a policy of rolling back migration flows. As a consequence, responsibility for preventing unwanted migrants to enter EU territory has been shifted towards transit countries (FFM 1997), a process facilitated through 'burden sharing', candidate and membership procedures and through various other stability pact, neighbourhood and other policies. Sometimes, however, it appears as if EU countries simply 'dump' unwanted immigrants at their neighbours' territories instead of recognising some international obligations, in particular if these are refugees.

The United States seems also to play a significant role in challenging transit migration. Of specific relevance is the US State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Person. Set up in 1994, simultaneously to similar transit migration initiatives in Europe, it systematically and globally monitors trafficking, including specific aspects of transit migration. The fact that both issues are integrated into one policy initiative illustrates the considerable overlap that exist between the two discourses. As a consequence, US embassies get engaged with all concerned governments and in addressing the phenomenon (see State Department, diverse Trafficking in Persons reports, published since 2001). Separate research, however, is required to sort out the confusion of transit migration and trafficking, another blurred and politicised topic altogether.

As a consequence of these diverse initiatives and actors, combating transit migration has become a top policy aim. For example, the increasing 'militarisation' of land and sea borders (Lutterbeck 2006: 64), as can be observed in the Mediterranean between Turkey and Greece, Italy and Albania is not only aiming at unwanted migration from neighbouring countries' citizens, but even more so at third-country nationals. Meanwhile, even a trench is

being dug between Ukraine and Russia, aiming to address transit migration from Russia, where entry often is visa-free, to Ukraine, which is said to be a major transit country to the EU.

The policy goals of the efforts presented here are clear. Either transit countries shall provide for some conditions that enable transit migrants to stay, for example by 'paying attention to specific needs ...of refugees', which prevents them from being prompted to move on; or they shall 'return them ...to their country of origin' (IOM 1995b: 48 and 47). In other words, transit migration policies aim to identify and intercept potential transit migrants, prevent them from moving on to the USA or western Europe, and either enable them to stay in their transit country, for example by improving asylum procedures, or to return them to their country of origin.

Transit Migration and Social and Human Rights Implications

Policies targeting transit migrants seem to hit the poorest and most disadvantaged migrants. This is because transit migrants seem to be those who cannot afford a direct flight to an appropriate country of destination but who have to organize their journeys along traditional routes and by traditional means, including walking, travelling in the back of lorries, by bus or by train. For example, the reason given why South Asians transit Azerbaijan has to do with the fact 'road and rail is the least expensive ...way' to travel (IOM 2003: 20).

For various reasons, transit migration, and in particular that of refugees raises new challenges in terms of refugee protection, human rights and the rights of migrants and their families. Diverse documents and media reports reveal cases of refoulement of refugees illustrating that transit countries, for a number of reasons (lack of resources, incomplete legislation, absence of adequate processing facilities, corruption), do not accept or process asylum applications and instead either ignore or indeed try to get rid of such troublesome populations (e.g. Human Rights Watch 2005). Other sources highlight the social suffering of transit migrants. Whilst, for example, the Council of Europe (2004: 1) occasionally perceived transit migrants as 'persons trapped in transit' FFM reports (1996, 1997) highlighted in more detail the poor living conditions of transit migrants and refugees.

UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations programme on Aids/HIV, is throwing light on a specific health related concern of transit migrants. Because 'Human migration, whether voluntary or involuntary, may result in the spread of HIV infection' and because migrants often pass through several countries, interventions must be planned 'for all stages – place of origin, transit and destination' (UNAIDS 1998: 1, 3). Transit, as it is argued, may offer 'increased opportunities for risk-taking behaviour', for example for economic reasons or because of the absence of social controls (ibid.: 3-4). It is remarkable that UNAIDS does not simply contribute

another argument to an otherwise alarmist discourse or calls for stricter migration controls; instead a specific need is identified, e.g. offering adequate health services at any stage of a migration process.

Ideally, transit migration is the move from one secure environment to another secure environment through an intermediary equally secure environment. Unfortunately, in reality transit migration seems to instead take place in insecure environments, as suggested in Table I.

Table I: Transit migration and insecure environments

Country of origin	Country(ies) of transit	Country of destination
insecure	insecure	insecure
insecure	insecure	secure
insecure	secure	secure
secure	secure	secure

Most transit migrations, as it could be hypothesised, fall into the second and third categories; further options, such as the move from a secure to an insecure environment are left out here as they are deemed rare or implausible (though trafficking may bring about such constellations). It should be noted, however, that the insecure environment of a transit country can still be comparably more secure than that of the country of origin, hence a gradual improvement of the human and social rights situation of a respective individual can often already be noted in the transit country.

Conclusion

Transit migration has become a prominent issue on the migration policy agenda; it is as politicised as it is a policy discourse. Transit migration has equally become a code word for ‘illegal immigration’ and for unwanted refugees, and as such has acquired a criminological profile. Efforts to combat illegal migration or unwanted refugees do in fact target transit migration and transit countries. On the other hand, transit migration is associated with insecurity, with a temporary status of non-belonging that results in exclusion from conventional protection regimes. This leads to various human rights concerns.

Two major principles can be identified that drive transit migration; protectionism, because destination countries and increasingly traditional transit countries impose restrictions that provoke would-be migrants to make the strangest, and sometimes dangerous deviations in

order to reach their destination; and class, because those migrants who are too poor to simply take a flight to their country of destination or to disguise their purpose by pretending to be tourists or businessmen take cheaper routes by foot, bus or train through other countries.

Often, transit migrants are not in transit out of choice, nor is transit intended or even planned; instead migrants are compelled to move on because their first country of immigration turns out to be an impossible place to stay, for legal, economic or social reasons. Often, the choice of transit, or the choice of a final country of destination, only occurs in course of a migration trajectory. In some cases, transit may turn out to be repeated migration or global mobility instead. Instead of identifying transit migrations a separate pattern or an individual event, it might be more appropriate to interpret migration as a continuum with different stages.

For various reasons – transit migrants might in fact be immigrants or multiple migrants - figures must be treated with some reservation. Instead, transit migration may be of much lower scale than some allege. That again leads to the question of the scale of the challenge transit migration poses to policy.

Nevertheless, there are ample observations, hints and evidence suggesting that transit migration is widespread and that numerous countries do experience migrants transiting their territories. What has become clear though is that the concept of transit migration, because of the difficulties and problems that characterise the concept, requires evidence-based refinement and reinterpretation.

ⁱ Even though the Dublin Convention has been signed in 1990, immediately after the fall of the Iron Curtain, it only came into force in 1997.

ii Personal conversation with Denise Holt, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, held at the occasion of a meeting at the UK embassy in Berlin. In this case transit migrants seem to have been confused with immigrants, namely in Libya, whilst in fact most of the 1.2-1.8 million migrants in Libya are labour migrants and only a minority can be considered transit migrants.

iii Because Turkey applies a clause of geographic reservation to the Geneva Convention it does not accept refugees from non-European countries, who, once being accepted by UNHCR have to be resettled.

iv For example, as up to 2004 Turkey allowed nationals of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, and the Central Asian republics to enter the country quite freely either without visas or with visas that can easily be obtained at airports and other entry points, see Apap et al. (2004: 19).

v EU-8 refers to the 2004 EU accession countries Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia.

vi TRIM is facilitated by IOM and co-funded by the European Commission and Italy.

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