



INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION Towards a new world order Sara Petroccia

A Book Review by Emilia Ferone

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This book is the outcome of Sara Petroccia's studies on globalization, multiculturalism and migration flows. A key element of this book is the analysis of a range of definitions and traits various events featuring the international migrations over time, alongside the attempt to understand and to discuss if the national state based narratives on migrations are able to understand and explain the complexity of the migration phenomenon or if such complexity can be caught only by a more global, multicultural and convergent perspective .

With genuine talent , the author shows as cultures of different parts of the world come together in interconnected localisms, generate dynamic hybrids, to new experiences and to the possibility of increasing fusion among different groups. Migration may also contribute to the emergence of new forms of identity, consisting of innumerable global contributions coming mainly from immigration itself. The author is focused on the issue of immigration and the starting point is the idea of freedom of movement and circulation to end with the immigration restrictions imposed by governments, which block all the benefits that immigration may bring: first, knowledge and contribution in terms of cultural diversity, and then the improvement of life chances of immigrants and their aid to their countries of origin. The focus shifts onto the topic of new international migration flows: the current ones, the ones - she said- are determining the new world order, and those that feed the formation of economic globalization. It is essential to have a pluralistic view of globalization, which does not reduce its explanation to individual or purely economic factors. It is really interesting observe, in this research work, as Sara Petroccia mixes the relationship among various factors and analysing the extent to which some of them have a random influence on others and if there are some independent, disjointed and uninfluenced factors among them. In her book the issues examined belong to sociological and political sciences areas, like migration flows, together with new sociological approaches on globalization that offer a cosmopolitan vision suggesting that previous theories are not keeping up with the transformations of our time and the processes of economic restructuring at the global level is considering as an increasingly important factor both in internal and international migration.



The search for resources, trade, investment and production has been a driving force for globalization, along with cultural aspects and immigration, which are not influenced by economic power. Sara Petroccia writes about the current stage of the debate on globalization and especially its claims have resulted in new and unknown interactions among people, among States and among individuals, i.e. among civilizations, traditions and political and institutional experiences that are very different, under the idea of multiculturalism. Then, she said, it is necessary to understand how to properly apply multiculturalism to human rights without destroying its universality. An even deeper need is to realize that there is an appropriate way and a distorted way of practicing multiculturalism.

In this book is clear the appreciation of the validity of all cultures must not lead to a kind of cultural relativism that paralyzes moral criticism a priori. It would be utterly wrong to conceive cultures as petrified and unchangeable monuments. The real and great cultures are living worlds in constant evolution and development. The author wrote "The right way to practice multiculturalism, and to preserve the universality of rights, demands the involvement of the great religions that constitute the hard core of cultural identification. Often resistance to changing cultural practices is justified by the symbolic sacral value that certain peoples attribute to them. Abandoning them could entail denying one's own religious identity, thus endangering their own survival. For these reasons, the great universal religions have originally looked upon with distrust to the expansion of human rights".

In this book is clearly the need of the recovery of the authentic universality of human rights, which are in this distancing themselves from globalization on the one hand and from multiculturalism.

Among the most significant of these features, there is undoubtedly a strong acceleration of the phenomenon of the loss of individual identity. When dealing with individual identity, in this book, it is here intended to refer to the problem of understanding and explaining how a person can keep their own identity, culture and tradition in a world in constant change. However, Sara Petroccia shows another meaning of individual identity, which, although less studied, has a more radical practical relevance and human value: every human being has a fundamental need to 'know their identity', i.e. to know 'who they are', to create a 'self -image' that would give sense to their actions and their life as a whole. This progressive fragmentation of the image of man is partially the result of several 'disorientations' related to the dissolution of those frames of values that have long constituted an implicit reference to the common Western civilization. The generalized loss of national identities causes today phenomena that might be considered a historical regression or involution. In many of those that could be considered the most firmly established nations, sometimes having a considerable historical legacy, there is the occurrence of phenomena that are often very sharp and even violent, like separatism, centrifugal and disruptive dynamics, extreme exaltation of differences that the historical process had gradually overcome and integrated into the unity of the nation. However, the cultural, social and political vacuum of these phenomena is clear when one realizes that they have not produced the



constitution, or perhaps the recovery, of communities that are truly inspired by a spiritual and ideal sense of 'belonging' to common tradition, history and destiny, but they show themselves, in practice, as attempts to pursue a better defense of local interests, cloaked in vague and general discourses of trampled identities. Current history shows therefore a situation of paradoxical globalization, which tends to dissolve various types of borders between peoples, stimulates or produces massive migrations, the mixing of cultures and traditions, and seems to project the future towards the existence of a planetary society, while, on the other hand, more and more particularisms, secessionisms, bloody tribal strives, and ethnic, racial, and religious intolerance abound. The common result of these two opposing trends is an increasing loss of identities, meaning those commonalities of roots that provide a human being with the aggregating reference base to be in the same time themselves and feel existentially related to other humans with whom to share the idea of belonging to a common heritage of values, customs, ideals and commitments.

To overcome this situation, which many today properly consider negative, and especially to hope to make sense and to give a value to the unstoppable process of globalization underway, one could think of trying again and on a large scale something similar to the construction of the ideal of nationality and then proceed to its historical embodiment. If it is true that today several peoples begin to conceive of a common history and destiny, it is no less true that such awareness emerges in many other parts of the planet and, even more so, that these 'common stories' cannot give rise to the feeling of a common history of mankind, since they have remained for thousands of years separated in space and time, and being still almost unknown to each other. It may be that in a not very distant future such a consciousness can be developed, perhaps by making some remarks on the common history of mankind, not in the political and military key, but under an anthropological view, thus assuming that the human race, under the most different latitudes, has evolved through cultural stages that are in many respects similar, giving rise to forms of civilization and culture at the same time original and very different, but also similar in many features, hence comparable, understandable and welcome by all. This may also be coupled with the awareness of a common destiny that future generations could be forced to live when faced with the serious ecological problems that are now on the horizon, and with the serious social issues that the development of globalization will increasingly highlight. These are, of course, possible future prospects. However a viable option right now might be the same one that at the time characterized the maturing of the concept of nation, namely the promotion of diversity, which globalization tends to overshadow, but which an elementary wisdom should instead try to safeguard, appreciating it not as a sign of 'strangeness', or even inferiority, compared with models of behaviour or values that are different from those of their own group, but as genuine wealth.

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