ABSTRACT

PRACTICAL TRIGGERS, BIASES AND PREJUDICES INSIDE RECEIVING COMMUNITY, WHICH MAY HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION OF REFUGEES AND FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS

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Results and discussion of the study. The process of social inclusion and integration of refugees and forcibly displaced persons, especially ones, who are being representatives of various socio-economical quintiles, as we have postulated on the basis of our previous study results [10,11], appears to be a highly complicated issue. In addition, this long term process is usually being influenced by numerous outer phenomena, which, however, normally exist in any community. Here we are talking about various social triggers, biases, prejudices, limitations, fears and expectations towards newcomers from the side of receiving community. Among most typical prejudices we name narrations that, for example, refugees, forcibly displaced person may increase the number of criminal acts committed on the territory of the analyzed state, because of weak financial condition, long lasting legalizing process, which prohibits applying for a job to provide for their families etc. Some people believe that newcomers will definitely bring with themselves infectious diseases and various illnesses, which may be highly dangerous for receiving community. Despite objectively high level of social tolerance and generally open minded attitude towards people, who are in need of fleeing from wars, armed conflicts, political and economical instabilities etc, we still may encounter pathological social opinions and negative behaviors towards refugees and other forcibly displaced people in receiving countries.
The most dangerous phenomena, which still appear to be absolutely actual are represented by opinions, that cultural diversity of newcomers, their differences in behavior, beliefs and attitudes will bring a disruption of social and national stability into a life of a receiving nation, i.e. the traditions, beliefs will be mixed up, the history and values of the given country will be reduced in their importance, and the state will face a period of a social and national ignorance.

The following typical prejudice on the matter of newcomers says, that refugees and forcibly displaced persons, alongside with migrants will try, and consequently will, “rob professional opportunities” from representatives of the receiving community.

Besides working places, there are people, who believe that individuals fleeing from war, in the aim of remaining permanently on the territory of the receiving country, will literally “rob” human potential of the receiving nation, i.e. women-refugees/forcibly displaced people will try to seduce local men and vice versa, by interrupting, or, even better, disrupting, cultural, national and human tradition of the accepting community.

However, there is also a different prism of the argument, which was mentioned as the last ones. Namely, numerous service providers may treat newcomers as an easy mark to cheat on them, or the refugees/forcibly displaced persons may also become victims of different types of violence (especially gender-oriented), just on the matter, that most people subconsciously treat them as a “weaker social group”.

In the frame of our cooperation with non-formal international group DAR for peace and equality, we have led numerous anonymous surveys among representatives of different socio-economical quintiles of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. Among their statements, in the frame of a current article, we would like to signalize two eloquent examples of prejudices/social biases and expectations towards refugees/forcibly displaced persons in action.

First experience was shared with us by the University professor, who fled from her home country and was being legalized on the territory of the EU as a person under international protection. What is important, the woman is a representative of a “rich quintile of refugees/forcibly displaced persons”, as we have been named this category of newcomers in our previous research [10,11], therefore, she provides for herself, affords expensive and luxurious goods and services, works in a receiving country, pays taxes and realizes her professional and scientific potential. Thus, she shared the story as follows: “I usually take taxi to reach my working place, or to go to some special spot in the city to spend time with my family, because currently I am subconsciously not ready to drive a car on my own in a different country than my home one. Once upon a time, before Christmas holidays, my family and I (my two daughters and I) were turning back from the Christmas village and were waiting for a taxi to pick us up home. In a meanwhile, the driver of another famous taxi company from the nearest taxi stop started approaching me. Firstly, he tried to make compliments to my look and style, then he asked about our country of origin. And, then, automatically (as I suppose) thinking that we are “typical poor girls-refugees, who are ready for everything” started violating me, harassing and laughing at me, when I told him that I will call the police. He was going like “come with me, I will pay for fish and meat for your Christmas table, poor refuge, take your chance, I am a taxi
driver, I will give you 100 Euro to spend evening with me”. It was twice violating under the prism of the fact that both of my children were witnessing that situation. On one side, I suppose, that the driver was drunk or something, because we always look like as actually “rich girls”, not poor and hungry ones. One the other hand, I think mostly it is because our displacement background, probably locals feel more secure to violate us. Anyway, our taxi services arrived soon and we successfully reached home”.

The second victim shares as follows: “I was using a taxi service from the airport and, by reaching my address of residence in an accepting city, I asked a driver to pay for his service by ApplePay (as I do usually). I was too exhausted and, besides, because I suffer from farsightedness, I did not check the total amount and believed that the driver will insert exactly the sum he signalized to me after the end of a drive. But, suddenly, he said that he wrongly placed 125 Euro instead of 25 Euro. I believed that he will make a refund soon, as he promised me to do. Especially, by taking into account the fact, that I honestly told him about my financial difficulties after arrival to a new country. But, he has changed the phone number and, eventually, even complaint against him to the taxi coordinating company did not make any result, I have not received any refund. Probably, if he had to deal with local, he would less probably try to cheat on him/her”.

Various harassment, underestimation, stalking and different types of violence could be explained by an obvious subconsciously different (subjectively “weaker”) position of refugees and forcibly displaced people. Local individuals may treat newcomers as helpless because of language barrier, “feeling of stranger” and, what is more, because of their PTSD caused by traumatic experiences that made individuals become actually refugees and forcibly displaced people. Subconsciously some representatives of local community may really treat aforementioned factors as reasons “not to ask for help”. Moreover, as we have seen from practical examples, most of visions of subjectively “dominating position of receiving society” are based not on real situation of newcomers, but rather on prejudices, expectations and personal visions of representatives of accepting society. It is commonly visible when representatives of accepting society are getting in touch with so-called “rich quintiles refugees”, who not just break stereotypes and prejudices, but even cause envy because of their objectively better social, professional and/or economical situation.

Anyway, the balance and social equality should be respected by both sides. It means, that the more inclusive and socially accepting receiving community becomes, the more potential newcomers may disclose in and for this community, the more impact they can share with it, and the more development they can cause. Eventually, the sustainable and tolerant society does not exceptionally makes a life more equal for all socio-economical quintile, but also moves the socio-economical development up.

Conclusions.
1. The common process of integration and social inclusion of refugees and forcibly displaced person is still quite a controversial issue.
2. In numerous cases, the success of integration and social inclusion of newcomers depends directly on prejudices, biases, limitations, fears and expectations, which the receiving society is dominated by, towards people fleeing from wars, armed conflicts, political and economical instabilities etc.
3. The more inclusive and tolerant receiving society will become, the more probable will become a level of a sustainable socio-economical prosperity of receiving community in general.

References:
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