MASS VIOLENCE & ATROCITIES

Hospitality: The Way of Hope

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Translated into English from the original Spanish version

Context

For centuries, humanity has been characterized by its interest in and constant practice of exploring the world, traveling long distances and—at the same time—finding new routes through political borders, sometimes because of forced mobility. People seek different paths of transit to their destination, whether they plan to stay for a certain period of time, hope for an eventual return to their place of origin, or seek to rebuild or set roots in a new place indefinitely. Any decision to stay is motivated by the search for guaranteed survival, with protection and long-lasting resolution.

Forced human mobility around the world is a current reality, creating challenges for states in relation to how they treat this phenomenon. In its latest Global Trends report for 2017, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees estimates there are 68.5 million people forcibly displaced. Of this, 40 million are the result of internal displacement, 25.4 million are refugees, and 3.1 million are asylum seekers. On average, more than 44,000 people are forced to flee their homes daily because of conflicts or persecution. Every two seconds a person is forced to migrate. This means that since you started reading this document, approximately 30 people have been forcibly displaced. In the Americas, there is a crisis, with massive refugee flows in North, Central, and South America, including the Caribbean. The continuous increase in internal and cross-border migratory flows suggests people are leaving their place of origin in search of protection against constant and systematic violations of their human rights. This also indicates an increased vulnerability involved in passing from one frontier to another (at regular, or more often at irregular, points) and direct actions of victimization in these territorial scenarios, in the host countries (transit or destination). That is, they are specific geospatial points where there is an increase in vulnerability and victimization.

Borders are the result of societal expression and have transformed through globalization. Those transformations are solidified through regional policies (both formal and informal) influenced by global networks of organized crime in border areas. Forced human mobility will always be characterized by the displacement between locations, or points; these points contain national borders. This dynamic is important to understand in context of the processes of conformation, transformation, and reconfiguration of nation states. Nation states are regions and territories that have been built under a number of cultural, social, political, economic, and religious beliefs, worldviews, meanings. People who inhabit these territories have gone through certain social processes to understand themselves as a community. Borders are part of that community construction and imaginary line, which is only perceived in a political map but not in human interaction. This interaction is essential to understanding the process of reception and/or expulsion of forced migrants when they arrive in new territories. They come in certain conditions of vulnerability (uprooted, exiled, violated, with psychosocial effects), carrying a bag full of dreams, desires, pains, memories, and, above all, hope. They can be alone or accompanied by family, friends, or simply people they have found along the journey.

In the face of this phenomenon, a changing architecture has been built by the international community to promote and generate legal mechanisms, policies, and negotiations, such as the Global Compacts, to support forced migrants. In addition to these efforts, it is also time to develop a better understanding of human interaction in relation to the phenomenon of forced human mobility. People are unique individuals, with personalities and subjectivities. Situations of vulnerability due to forced mobility have direct and indirect effects and can generate wounds. This vulnerability is characterized by breaks, as in periods of fragility that evoke a need to be protected, whether by another human being or by oneself through coping strategies and resilience. The process of protection involves specific options for forced migrants and the receiving community in a territory. In these interactions, symbolic, emotional, and instrumental actions carry significance, including a depiction of the "other" in order to know if they are a threat. At this point there is a choice: the expulsion out of threat or fear, or an offering of protection and shelter, the latter of which strengthens societies and construction of communities. How can this be done? Through hospitality. Moreover, how is it possible to

be hospitable when the other is not only different from me but also resists identification?

Hospitality is a practice, a disposition. It is a human action whose purpose is to understand the vulnerability of the other and the need for protection to promote a welcoming culture, characterized by solidarity and the construction of peace, thereby building bridges and breaking down the barriers or borders that dehumanize and, in some cases, threaten the dignity of people. Hospitality enables conversations that guarantee local integration, responses to humanitarian action, and prevention of violence with a strong potential for political advocacy. In this way, it is possible to engage the other in dialogue and collaborative actions with a cooperative approach. Hospitality promotes the construction of open platforms, solidarity among groups, participatory dialogues, and creation of shared culture.

Challenges

Promote formal spaces (e.g., academic, investigative, civil society) to reflect and discuss how to understand hospitality in order to implement programs that support populations in a state of forced mobility as well as receiving territories (transit and/or destination).

From a social-fabric constructive perspective, encourage conversations with concrete actions between communities and organizations that integrate perspectives of hospitality and promote human interaction to better understand the challenges that occur at a humanitarian-response level.

Recommendations

Incorporate policies that promote hospitality strategies at different levels of working agendas.

Understand the potential of implementing proactive, inclusive, and constructive language on the consequences of human mobility in hospitality programs and campaigns. Promote narratives that involve and allow conversations to be operationalized in order to avoid one-sided ideas that seek to be right.

Reduce narratives that promote polarization and are unconstructive. For example, narratives to "combat xenophobia" only state the issue; they do not direct actions to change the problem.

Proposals

Integrate hospitality in areas of humanitarian action, local integration, advocacy, and prevention of violence, from a culture-of-peace perspective.

Implement four actions strategically:

1. **Welcome:** Expand opportunities for safe and regular routes for migrants and refugees, favoring human rights and guaranteeing respect for human dignity, especially in relations with individuals.

2. **Protect:** States, authorities, governments, and organizations must guarantee measures and mechanisms for the protection of human rights, especially the right to life, for individuals at points of origin, in transit, and at destinations. The differential perspective, in this case, is to concentrate on populations with certain situations and characteristics of vulnerability.

3. **Promote:** From a social and professional inclusion perspective, promote integral human development and recognize the benefits and opportunities generated by the migratory phenomenon.

4. **Integrate:** Encourage societies with cross-cultural engagement and the active participation of migrant populations, favoring integrative processes that recognize and value the benefits of exchange between cultures. Foster positive narratives in the construction of meanings, social fabrics, citizenship, peace culture.