

How many faces might migration have?

A review of: “Two Faces of European Migration” by Viktor Glied¹

János Besenyo²

Abstract:

AdLibrum Publishers recently published the book titled *Two Faces of European Migration*. The author, Viktor Glied strives to express with the choice of title that he does not see migration in black and white but presents several perspectives. This may even mean that the book will not generate huge revenue for the author, but during the reading it became clear to me that Viktor Glied is not interested in the number of copies sold, but rather he examines the issue of migration as much as possible. The ordinary reader could even neglect this fact, because so many articles, studies and even books have been written on this subject in the last few years that these could block the Danube. Understanding of this topic is also hindered, because this issue is significantly over-politicized, and the stakeholders do not attempt to have a professional debate on migration. The author seems to break with this “comfortable, well-established point of view” and, through 200 pages, lists various statements, arguments and counterarguments that raise questions for the readers to make them think about and then react to. As a reviewer, I recommend reading the book for this reason alone, to all those who are interested in migration and related phenomena that associated with it (terrorism, organized crime, employment of foreigners, issues on integration, tensions in social coexistence etc.).

Keywords:

migration;
European Union;
social tensions;
securitization.

¹ Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science and International Studies, University of Pécs, Hungary.

² Assistant Professor at Doctoral School for Safety and Security Sciences, African Research Institute, University of Óbuda, Hungary;

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7198-9328>; besenyo.janos@uni-obuda.hu.

Two faces of European Migration

The book summarizes a 15-year-long intensive research period, during which the author – together with his colleagues – dealt with various aspects of migration in the framework of domestic and international projects. He also published several significant papers, (with) some of them being fundamental works in migration studies. Some of them became basic works in the migration-related literature³. In the meantime, besides theoretical research, the author obtained the account of personal experiences from those involved in migration, and those who have helped to understand the topic better with various inputs. At that time, only a few (researchers, university lecturers, experts, employees of non-governmental organizations) were engaged in this issue in Hungary, but then the situation changed after the 2015 “migration crisis”. The topic has become popular and now almost everyone is interested in this subject. According to a foreign friend of mine who spends a lot of time in Hungary, Hungarians consider themselves experts in two things: football and migration – they are able to talk about these topics for hours. Therefore, the author’s efforts to publish a book on migration that is understandable and usable for all are commendable. The reviewer of the volume is Professor Zoltán Dövényi, who also conducted research on migration and contributed to the objective view of the manuscript with his balanced opinion.

The book consists of three main chapters; the first is entitled ‘Migration Challenges in the European Union’. In this chapter, we learn about the migration history of Western European community, the nature of immigration, sending regions, and European responses. This is extremely important in order to understand that the majority of EU leaders and the average citizen also think about migration in a different way. This is important for this reason alone, as most Central and Eastern European countries that joined the European Union in 2004 have a completely different view on migration than Western European countries, for historical and other reasons. Hungary in particular, which has had a consciously designed “migration policy” for hundreds of years (Miletics and Stohl, 2019). Additionally, newly arrived countries did not have a colonial past, which also affects the composition of migrants who arrive in Western European countries. This distinction is illustrated very clearly by the author, as well as how Western European people rebuilt their countries after World War II, with the help of guest workers from the Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa, who were unwilling to be admitted at all. The first guest workers came from the former colonies because they had language skills, were familiar with the European atmosphere, and the expectations of host society. These relations continued, mainly with the former French- and British-ruled African countries like Morocco, Algeria, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Tunisia, Chad, etc. However, the projected “business model” did not work as expected, so guest workers did not return to their homeland, but remained in Europe and were later followed by their family members. European countries were not prepared for this at all. They tried to trivialize

³ One of the best known of these books is the *Migration in the 21st Century*, published in 2016 together with István Tarrósy and Zoltán Vörös, which already processed the experiences of the 2015 migration crisis. He also edited the volume *Migration Trends Today* with co-editors in 2014. Intentionally the author often links his other field of research, water safety to migration, on which he has also published several publications.

the difficulties and problems of coexistence related to immigrants, trusted in the supposed positive effects of multiculturalism and started to implement their integration almost only at the 24th hour, when another mighty mass, more than one and a half million people arrived in the continent. The European Union was even not prepared for this, therefore managing the wave of migration was characterized by ‘communication battles’ rather than factual political actions adopted by the European Community (Glied, 2020). This is despite the fact that the states of the continent need to cope with an aging trend of population, the maintenance of social and pension systems is becoming more and more difficult, and sustaining economic competitiveness is facing difficulties, which would require a consciously managed migration policy. According to the author, a more coherent European immigration policy could provide an answer to the challenges of migration, but several European countries do not agree with this, and they want to keep most of migration regulations in a national competence. These contradictions were also visible in the management of the 2014-2016 refugee crisis where border defense systems clearly failed. This failure has forced some European states to revise their refugee policies and introduce stricter restrictions on the admission of migrants. Thus, the former “refugee-friendly” attitude was reversed, prompting European Union leaders to restore protection to the EU’s external borders and to come to an agreement with Turkey on tackling illegal migration. Glied (2015) wrote an article entitled *Submission* in which he examined the conflicts in detail and in more depth in this book, directly in the light of the migration crisis. He was noticeably influenced by the thoughts of Houellebecq’s book with the same title (Houellebecq, 2015) or Douglas Murray’s *dark skies* (Murray, 2019). ‘In the Two Faces of European Migration’ the author modulated pessimistic scenarios by adding other factors that redefine one-dimensional approaches to migration processes. In this chapter readers can read about immigrants who have been living in the European Union, discovering who they are, what their background is, how they have settled or how they have actually created parallel societies that are considered serious security challenges for the host countries.

Glied does not attempt to present bright stories, but also the fault-lines and challenges between the arrivals and host societies. Here we can also see migration policy documents, as well as the European Commission’s new findings on the feasible management of migration. Although they show recurring policy and regulatory elements, there is little elaborate content that really follows events and could be the starting point for a specific legislative act. Unfortunately, this also contributes to the fact that there is still no common European position on migration management.

The second chapter ‘The Two Faces of European Migration’ addresses deep social, political, economic issues and debates that have arisen over immigration in recent decades. First, the author takes security challenges into account. In the first half of the chapter, he emphasizes the potential benefits of migration (demography, maintenance of public/state systems, economic development etc.) as opposed to its risks, but at the end he fully agrees with Péter Tálás that migration has both “advantages and disadvantages” (Tálás, 2019). The



author concludes here that the EU can no longer exist without immigrants and guest workers – as the coronavirus epidemic has shown since 2020 – when labour shortages have been a major concern in certain areas of agriculture. Furthermore, Glied lists the risks, acknowledging language problems, growing ethnic, religious and cultural tensions, deteriorating security conditions and terrorist attacks, saying that many of those are perpetrated on a migrant background. Here, he also draws attention to an aspect that has already been noticed and utilized by political forces: social perception and subjective sense of security.⁴ He also mentions the inability of overburdened border guards as a problem to distinguish political refugees, asylum seekers and economic refugees, which raises human rights concerns as well. He dedicates this part to the fall of multiculturalism and Willkommenskultur, its reasons and background, and he raises the question what sort of integration strategies should be implemented.

It can also be traced in this chapter that the connotation of refugees as victims has been replaced by the formula for migrants as perpetrators; how the attitudes of Western societies towards migration have changed and the former open-minded attitude has been replaced by discretion, then distancing, and even rejection. Less interesting topics to society, mainly related to immigrants, have emerged, such as mosque constructions, the so-called headscarf debate, Islamization of Europe, and the escalation of conflicts between Christian–Jewish and Islamic populations. Regarding these elements Glied lists almost all the pros and cons, and finally concludes that most European countries have not been able to integrate the predominantly Muslim migrant masses that have already created and operated parallel societies. This could lead to the decline of Europe, the crisis of liberal democracy, and the strengthening of Islamic fundamentalism and far right.

The third chapter is about how the migration crisis was presented in the Hungarian government's policies and communication. In this part the author examines the migration crisis and its communication campaign through the lens of Hungary. Glied attempts to objectively present the migration period and the Hungarian government's answers to it. Although he accepts governmental decisions more or less, calling them reasonable, he often considers government communication simplified and divisive.

He considers certain elements of the government's communication, such as billboards and television advertisements with the words "If you come to Hungary, you have to be respected..." misleading, because the Hungarian population had no personal experience with the phenomenon. However, this statement only partially follows the reflects reality, because the experts of the Hungarian Army Scientific Research Center were already in the

⁴ In connection with this, I would note that the Hungarian Army Scientific Research Center, which I conducted between 2014 and 2018, was the only scientific organization whose staff conducted a questionnaire / interview survey at the border settlements where migrants crossed in 2015. The research focused on the issues of social perception and subjective sense of security. The public part of the research was finally published. Attila Rácz and Péter Balogh, „A migrációs válságon innen és túl. Együttérzés, elutasítás, bizalom és szolidaritás (egy szociális kutatás eredménye) in Europe and Migration, János Besenyo, Péter Miletics and Orbán, Balázs, Eds., Budapest, Hungary: Zrínyi Kiadó, 2019, pp. 335-363. and Rácz Attila, „The effects of Hungarian Defence Forces (HDF) border security deployment on the civilian population's subjective sense of security,” *Belvedere Meridionale*, 30(4), pp. 83-95, April 2018, doi: 10.14232/belv.2018.4.5.

border area at the beginning of the migrant crisis, where they were the only ones who made interviews with the affected settlements' residents. The research also got published. In this chapter we can also read about the temporary security fence erected at the southern border, which successfully diverted the wave of migrants to other countries, and then performed the recent border protection task with the active involvement of the Armed Forces and further significant developments. The author also addresses the issue of the refugee quota here, as well as the government's proposal, supported not only by the V4 countries but also by several European countries – that migrants' problems should be solved in their home countries by providing a livable, safe environment. It should be the preferred solution instead of allowing them into Europe, where we are not yet able to integrate them effectively. The author presents the international reactions triggered by the actions of the Hungarian government and European debates on the issue of migrants, which are still in progress.

The well-edited book contains a lot of useful information, which the author has sought to present to readers in the most objective way. However, minor mistakes can be found in the book in relation to literature, references and sources. However, these small errors do not reduce the value of the book. After reading this volume, it becomes clear that migration has not two, but many millions of faces. This is why the issue of migration cannot be managed in a uniform way, as every person, case or situation requires a different approach. By the time readers realize it, the book has already reached its goal.

Bibliography

- Glied, V. (2015) 'Behódolás? Európai szélsőséges pártok és a bevándorlás – helyzetkép' in Tuka, Á. (ed.) *Változó Európa? Kérdések, kétségek, válaszok*. Pécs: Publikon Kiadó, pp. 179-196.
- Glied, V. (2020) *Az európai migráció két arca*. Budapest, Hungary: Ad Librum.
- Houellebecq, M. (2015) *Submission*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Miletics, P., and Stohl, R. (2019) 'A magyar államtér helye, szerepe a történelmi migrációs folyamatokban' in Besenyő, J., Miletics, P. and Orbán B. (eds.) *Európa és a migráció*. Budapest: Zrínyi Kiadó, pp. 230-301.
- Murray, D. (2018) *The Strange Death of Europe: Immigration, Identity, Islam*. London: Bloomsbury Academic & Professional.
- Rácz, A. (2018) 'The effects of Hungarian Defence Forces (HDF) border security deployment on the civilian population's subjective sense of security', *Belvedere Meridionale*, 30(4), pp. 83-95. doi: 10.14232/belv.2018.4.5.
- Rácz, A. and Balogh, P. (2019) 'A migrációs válságon innen és túl. Együttérzés, elutasítás, bizalom és szolidaritás (egy szociális kutatás eredménye)' in Besenyő, J., Miletics, P. and Orbán B. (eds.) *Európa és a migráció*. Budapest: Zrínyi Kiadó. pp. 335-363.
- Tálas, P. (2019) 'A migráció mint biztonságpolitikai probléma', *Magyar Tudomány*, 180(1), p. 68. doi: 10.1556/2065.180.2019.1.6.