TRAVEL CAUTION

Smuggling and illegal
immigration may be
encountered in this area

Do not travel alone
Avoid encounters with suspicious groups
Avoid traveling at night
Dial 911 to report illegal activity

IN)R
International Network for Immigration Research

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MIGRATION
RESEARCH
INSTITUTE

LIMEN

Limen

Limen is a semiannual International Journal of the International Network for Immigration Research (INIR) published by the Hungarian Migration Research Institute. Articles published in the journal reflect the views of their authors and do not represent the official positions of INIR or the Migration Research Institute.

Frontispiece:

Warning sign near the US-Mexico border, Arizona. Photo: shutterstock.com

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Table of Contents

Lectori Salutem!

When we launched Limen as the journal of the Migration Research Institute (MRI) in 2020, our main goal was to increase the number of our English-language publications to support the internationalization of the institute. In the past four years, we met and collaborated with numerous leading scholars of immigration studies and its related disciplines. Their contributions not only increased the relevance and academic merit of Limen, but also helped us to build a network which can give a new impetus to our activities.

In November 2023, MRI and four other research centers established the International Network for Immigration Research (INIR). The members of INIR consider immigration a topic that should be assessed with a multifaceted approach that takes into account both the benefits and the challenges. The members of the network share the principle that host countries are sovereign nation states with the right to pursue and enforce their chosen immigration policies that reflect the perspectives of their societies. Instead of merely making normative declarations based on an ideologically driven approach dominated by a strong humanitarian agenda, member organizations address the political, social, economic, and security considerations of immigration in order to develop realistic, long-lasting and responsible policy on this crucial issue.

To further their aims, the members of INIR decided to form an international advisory board for Limen that will serve as a publishing platform for multidisciplinary research and scholarship on migration and its related phenomena. In this double issue, the experts of INIR are elaborating on topics that were raised at the first joint workshop held by the network in Budapest in 2023. The timely issues covered include a rethinking of the international asylum system, the instrumentalization of migration, the shifts in the political preferences of the Hispanic population of the United States, and the challenges posed by immigration and integration in France.

Budapest, 28. 06. 2024

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Viktor Marsai PhD
Executive Director
Migration Research Institute

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Book recommendation by Sára Kmeczkó

Omar Sayfo – Viktor Marsai – Kristóf György Veres: Whose Space Is It? Parallel Societies and Urban Enclaves in Western Europe. MCC Press, Budapest 2024.

Are there no-go zones in Europe? The answer is complex and highly sensitive politically. *Whose Space Is It?* is a volume tackling the gap in answers. It is the first scholarly work not only in Hungary but also internationally to offer a thematic comparison between immigrant-populated urban neighborhoods in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Holland, Britain, and the USA, together with the issues associated with these locales.

The issue of parallel societies has been brought to the fore of European political and public discourse in recent years. Polarized positions on the issue may go to extremes: some deny the continent has a problem at all, while others talk about "no-go zones" and conditions approaching civil war. The main goal of the volume authored by Migration Research Institute staff is to explore the phenomenon through comparative analysis across Western European and, in one chapter, North American examples. The book combines scholarly qualities with popular science for an accessible reading presented in thematic blocks.

Chapter I explores the background and patterns of the physical segregation of immigrants. It surveys the transformation that took place in the past decades in the Western and Northern European urban areas explored. The first immigrant-populated neighborhoods in Europe emerged in the 1960s when masses of people started arriving from the former colonies and through interstate labor lease agreements. They were put up by the receiving states in areas where property prices were the lowest. In Britain, Belgium, Holland, and Austria these meant working-class districts with poor infrastructure. France constructed concrete housing projects for the new arrivals. Germany, Denmark and Sweden offer up examples of both patterns, depending on the city. Later on, family reunification boosted the number of immigrants significantly, and because these neighborhoods continued to offer relatively low-cost housing, they remained attractive for the new arrivals as well. In a parallel trend, people from majority society were trickling out of these areas.

The chapter clarifies the widespread terminologies used in the political discourses of the countries under study, and it traces how the expression "no-go zone" became associated with immigrant neighborhoods from its original use in the context of the civil war in Northern Ireland. The authors of the volume establish how the 2015 migration wave also pushed to the center of public attention issues of the integration of immigrants already living in Europe. These issues were considered taboo before, thus could not become part of political discourse. As a result, the expression 'no-go zones' also acquired a new meaning. It is now commonly used to refer to neighborhoods where immigrants living in parallel societies constitute the majority of residents. Such societies are characterized by crime organized on the basis of ethnicity and worse than average public safety. Some majority groups experience a major loss in their subjective perception of security in relation to these areas. Authorities lack an understanding of the inner workings of these districts. Of their own volition or under political pressure they follow different practices on the job here than in areas inhabited by majority society.

Chapter II analyzes the social, cultural, and political obstacles to the integration of immigrants, particularly the non-European identity constructions of some immigrant communities. Preserving cultures that differ from those of Europe is aided further by "importing" spouses, as well as family reunification. The success or failure of integration is of course also due in large part to the integration policies of the receiving states, and the authors dedicate the next chapter to these.

Chapter III presents the range of integration efforts arising from the diverging historical trajectories of European countries, highlighting the contrasts between Anglo-American multiculturalism, French policies of assimilation, and the German model. The chapter also examines the educational policies applied in immigrant-majority areas, along with their impact on immigrant participation in the labor market. The authors establish that in countries where immigrants arrived in large numbers as unskilled labor (such as Germany, Belgium, Holland, France, and Austria), or where they landed as refugees (such as Germany and Sweden), their rates of unemployment are invariably higher than the majority society average. The reason is that immigrants from outside Europe tend to be less educated, and the degrees they may have are often non-equivalent to degrees issued by European universities. Consequently, most of them find employment in industry and the service sector, which positions are more exposed to economic uncertainties and crises. The employment prospects of second- and third-generation immigrants are further weakened by worse-than-average standards of education in immigrant area schools.

The neighborhoods populated by immigrants from different backgrounds are of course not identical. Chapter IV analyzes the factors determining the inner culture of the areas. The authors first seek an answer to the assertion that in some urban areas it is no longer possible to get by in the official tongue of the receiver country. The volume establishes that immigrants from lower socio-economic backgrounds generally tend to have a poorer grasp on the receiving country's language, which difference remains detectable in the weaker writing skills of the second and third generations. Their particular dialects often become ubiquitous in immigrant-populated areas. At the same time, these neighborhoods are inhabited by people arriving from different countries, therefore the language of the receiving state becomes a primary lingua franca for residents. Thus, there are no areas yet in Europe where one cannot get by in the tongue of the receiving country – with the exception of some Swedish districts housing immigrants from 2015.

The chapter also explores the patterns of organization of religious life in immigrant areas. Although socio-political public discourse is typically focused on Islam, the volume also discusses Christians arriving from outside Europe. The authors describe how the problems of ghettoization, parallel societies, and no-go zones affect areas populated by Muslim and non-Muslim (Christians from the Caribbean and Africa, etc.) immigrants in similar ways. In relation to Muslim areas the book states that their mien and street culture, which are shaped not by Islam but the character of the ethnic groups living there, are far from homogeneous.

The chapter also discusses the religious organization of European Muslims. The authors highlight that Western European countries typically do not have organically developed Muslim organizations connected to local states, therefore the organization of religious observation is overseen by entities connected to foreign states and non-state actors. There are several thousand Muslim organizations in Europe today, typically operating in a form that adjusts to the legal environment of the receiver country. For practical reasons their work is centered on the neighborhoods inhabited by the target population, as well as urban nodes within easy reach. Larger sender countries like Turkey or Morocco make the organization of religious life for their citizens living in Europe part of their diaspora policy framework. To a lesser extent, but Algeria, Tunisia, Pakistan and other Muslim countries also support the running of mosques and Muslim organizations in Europe, typically as part of bilateral cultural diplomacy. Although it has no diasporas, Saudi Arabia too used to play a decisive role in religious organization. However, due to the political changes of recent years, the Gulf country has withdrawn considerably from such

activities. Apart from state actors, there are also numerous non-state organizations and groups operating in Europe, including the Muslim Brotherhood, Tablighi Jamaat, and Salafis.

Chapter IV also engages with issues of political participation among the residents of immigrant-majority areas. These districts tend to lean to the political left because the guest laborers that constituted the mass arrivals of the 1970s and '80s gained initial support from left-wing trade unions. Subsequently, it was typically left-wing politicians who opened up opportunities for family reunification, gaining citizenship, and social integration for immigrants. Politicians with Muslim origins also tend to be affiliated with left-wing or green parties. For now, Muslims are significantly underrepresented in national politics compared to their numbers in society, but at the level of municipalities their presence in roughly on par with their demographic ratio. While the political participation of immigrants, including Muslims, increases as their integration deepens, their own political parties have rarely become successful. The reason for this is that the voter base they target is highly heterogeneous, with identities defined by several factors that include ethnicity, place of residence, social position, religious affiliation, and levels of integration. One exception to this rule is Denk, a political party that has successfully contested elections in Holland since 2017. The party is supported by Turkey, and it managed to channel the immigrant vote following the collapse of the socialists.

The chapter states that besides religion, the identity and world view of some of the immigrants are determined to a large extent by a counterculture that emerged in the early 1990s. This counterculture is inspired by hip-hop music originating from America, and it is supported by left-leaning ideas. Its performers use American formulae to articulate their social and political thoughts.

Chapter V engages with the phenomena most frequently featured in news media, feeding public fears the most. Analyzing available crime statistics, the authors explore whether immigrant-majority areas are in fact dangerous. They also cover clan criminality, or a subtype of crimes that can be linked to particular groups of immigrants. The volume establishes that the claim of public safety statistics invariably being worse in immigrant-majority areas is not true, despite examples such as Rinkeby in Stockholm. On the other hand, residents' subjective sense of security is below average almost everywhere. Even though in several countries, including Germany, the least safe areas are not immigrant-majority neighborhoods but downtown areas and train stations, a significant portion of the perpetrators

apprehended here are of immigrant background who live in neighborhoods of inexpensive accommodation. Besides cultural and economic characteristics, the causes of the high crime rates also include the fact that members of these communities tend to be younger than the median age of the population, thus they include a higher proportion of the age groups generally responsible for committing crimes. Germany and Sweden also have clan criminality that is typically connected to Middle Eastern and African immigrant groups.

Although everyday life is mostly quiet in immigrant neighborhoods, the tensions that surface from time to time have led to riots on a number of occasions in nearly every Western country. The authors claim that authorities tend to respond according to the practice of local police. In Germany, Britain, and Holland police typically react with force to the rioters. Fearing societal repercussions, there are usually no forceful responses in France, while Swedish police were completely unprepared for the flare-ups of street violence that have occurred since 2015.

Chapter V analyzes the conflicts imported to Europe from the home countries of immigrants, giving particular emphasis to the phenomenon of "long-distance nationalism" and the increase in antisemitism.

Immigrant-population neighborhoods, ghettoes, no-go zones also exist outside Europe. The final part of the volume, Chapter VI explores the similarities and differences between Latino immigrant communities in the United States and the immigrant communities of Europe.

Whose Space Is It? Parallel Societies and Social Enclaves in Western Europe is a well-structured work overall. The writing is accessible, the volume of works consulted is impressive, and the text is effectively complemented by numerous graphics, charts, and maps.