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THESES of PH.D. DISSERTATION

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International Migration and Politics – chances of paradigm
change in the migration policy of developed countries

Supervisor:
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1. Research background and choice of topic

The topic of this paper is the governance of mobility, and the opposite of it, namely, the concept and strategies of immobility and localization. Global mobility is an intensely stratified phenomenon and an essential aspect of the globalizing condition is precisely the creation of mechanism for distinguishing between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ mobilities.

International migration is not only a simple social symptom, but it has become a process with such a complex causality system, that permeates almost every aspect of our everyday lives. My thesis uses the presumption of more and more researchers¹ as a basic starting point, that the process of globalization suffuses all factors of production except labor. Flow of capital went through a dramatic increase in the past decades, international trade makes up an increasingly larger part of economy, yet barely more than three percent of the world’s population live in other country where he/she was born. According to UN calculations, one in 600 people takes part in the international migratory flows annually. In my paper, I deal with distortion of human mobility compared to other factors of the economy. Since the expressions ‘international migration’ and ‘security’ are brought together more and more often, I assumed that in the relative scarcity of migratory flows compared to other economic factors, the concept of security is playing a significant role.

Therefore my paper places in focus the questions and issues of migration in relation of security. My first hypothesis is that security, as a concept (or idea, aim, etc changing according to context) regularly recited by developed countries, plays a significant role in the decreasing growth of human mobility compared to the pace globalization would naturally induce. In order to examine this statement, I need an analysis of the literature on security aspects of migration, and draw conclusions in order to grasp the common points between the two concepts. I assume that migration is a natural target of security studies, since in addition to being easily securitized, its research also requires a interdisciplinary and multidimensional approach – not to

¹ For example:

Freeman, R.: People flows in globalization, *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20, 2006, 145-170. o. vagy Pritchett, L.: The future of migration: Accommodating irresistible forces and immovable ideas, mimeo, JFK School of Government, Harvard University 2006
The same statement is made by Badie and Smouts as well as Saskia Sassen in their various publications.

mention that the expanding conceptualization of security operates in about the same circle of disciplines as the throughout and complex approach of migration research.

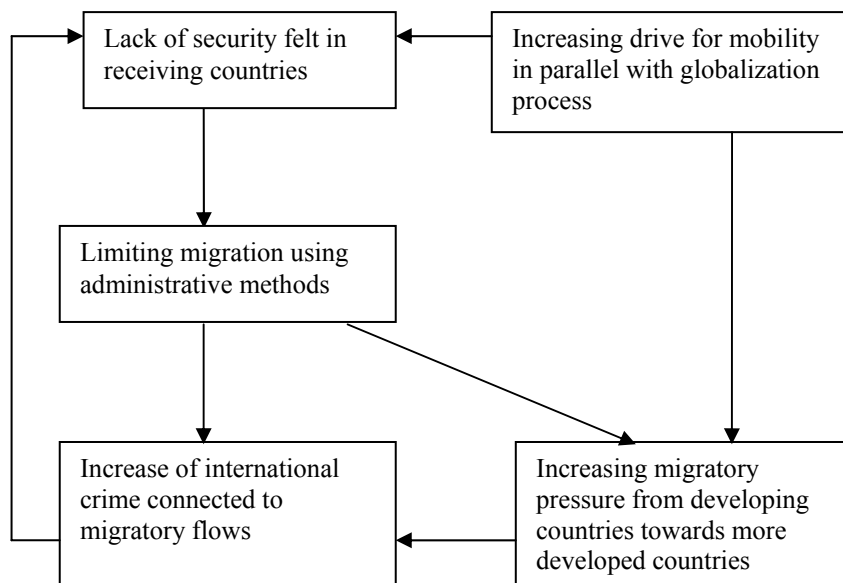
Thereafter, I attempt to highlight a concept with a relatively fresh literature that might be able to bridge some of the challenges and anomalies that present migration policies deal with – or at least might create a different context for the discussion of these problems. The theoretical basis of my paper is shown in the figure below. The expressions on the table are explained in details in the course of the paper together with their theoretical and practical background.

Since the figure itself represents a rebounding, neverending process that gets more intensive with every circle, it poses the following main questions:

- How does an external factor (like ‘increasing drive for mobility parallel to globalization processes’) lead to this circle? How can international migration alone produce the feeling of insecurity in receiving countries? Can anything be done to change this latter effect?
- If already in this circle, what can be done to get out of it, or at least dampen its momentum?

My thesis searches the answers for the above questions.

The logic framework of the thesis background



Operating with and processing exclusively older and new theories, questions on the empirical foundation and applicability of my paper may rightfully arise. Well,

looking at the structure of my thesis it would be difficult to defend, and it is not my intention either. My thesis aims to fulfill theoretical needs, and to answer theoretical questions. The reason for this may be my personal attraction to theoretical approaches and views, but I would rather mark it in my several years of research and work in relation with different types and systems of migration control. This experience has finally lead me to put questions on the very foundations of migration control mechanisms, and carry out thorough examinations there, finding answers in the basic ideas which makes up of the roots of it.

2. Examined topics, literature base, and applied methods of research

The first chapter of my thesis summarizes the most important processes of international migration. In short, it goes through the most important basic definitions and theories developed so far in global migration research. Without listing these theoretical concepts and schools, some of the later statements in the thesis would remain without a conceptual base.

In terms of literature it might be easily guessed that this topic bears the most and widest literature background. This abundance of sources would present a good opportunity to extend my explorations in the topic, but this chapter plays only an introductory role in the thesis. Therefore I tried to collect the kind of literature which can, upon intensified interest on the part of the reader, provide a well-founded base for later personal inquiries.

I did not feel the obligation to enlist significant amount of Hungarian literature in this chapter, since I found that there has been no large scale work in Hungary, which would produce a general and comprehensive summary on the theories of migration (again, emphasis is on theory, since in empirical field there has been many brilliant relevant Hungarian studies). The fact that there has been no analysis of the topic of the third and fourth chapter also makes a distinct point in putting less emphasis on Hungarian research.

The second chapter, after framing the relevant theoretical background and precisely positioning the covered field of research, examines in detail the literature on the so called securitization process of migration policy. In this chapter I pose a good number of questions that are connected to the social, economic, and political world

order of our present times, since both migration and security are topic where the analysis of causality leads to higher and higher levels, reaching philosophic spheres in the end. Thus, the second chapter leaves some space for unfolding a kind of philosophic logic, trying to uncover what sort of global socioeconomic reasons rule over the increasingly intensive control and filtering of migration by developed countries of the Western world.

In the second chapter I attempt to find theoretical proof for the hypothesis that international migration by itself alone can be a security threat to the population of developed states. In order to prove this statement, I redefine security in a special view of human and individual security, linking it mainly with economics and welfare.

The analysis I present in this chapter on the migration policy of the European Union also helps to demonstrate how political and scientific migration discourse goes through a securitization process.

Finally, from this securitized approach of international migration logically comes the question: what is effective and efficient migration control, and what kind of measures and methods are used by developed states in order to reach a high effectiveness of migration control?

The literature processed by the second chapter reaches to relatively fresh articles of English language, since the securitization of migratory processes intensified mainly in the last two decades.

The third chapter places the already described security logic of migration opposite to a new approach represented only by few researchers so far. This new approach seeks to answer the questions of migration posed from the security logic with a new approach using political economy methods. Therefore this chapter not only diverts from the previous one by its methodology, but also the traditional sociology-oriented view of migration research, since it uses mainly economic tools. This chapter also starts with a methodological introduction, where all economic concepts and theories are described which can help in understanding the main concept.

This chapter composes the hypothesis I deem most important in my thesis, namely that the management and control of international migration in Western states would become easier and more effective, if it would shift from the presently used, security based, administrative approach to a market based approach. In other words: according to this hypothesis, the security risks induced by international migration could

become easier to manage if the methods of risk management itself would shift from security to market basis.² The logical background of this main hypothesis is in effect the conclusion of chapter two.

The above hypothesis is seemingly paradox. But in order to better elaborate what this idea means, the fourth chapter presents a theoretic model that could bring an alternative in present political practice, solving problems of negatively considered phenomena of immigration. This model is sort of a possible model of the theoretic framework provided in chapter three, presenting ideas and practical solutions. Since this model cannot bring empirical evidence of any theories described in chapter three (it has not yet been applied anywhere in the world), proving the hypothesis remains also only on theoretical ground.

Chapter three also describes economic theories that can provide alternative views for uncovering the roots and background of international migration mechanisms, thus lending the logical framework of examining the hypothesis.

In terms of literature the third and fourth chapters reach over and entirely different scale than the previous chapters, since this market based approach of migration control reaches back to only the beginning of this century, parallel to the advanced securitization process of migration. The source is therefore a narrow line of English and German language literature that is difficult to access, as well as personal talks and consultations made with its authors. This scarcity of literature lies with its paradox-like statements I already mentioned, and the moral objections it usually awakens in most people, even if it is morally totally defensible. Another factor for thinker and politicians to discard this scheme is that it would require a radical change of presently prevailing paradigms of migration control that would reduce securitization possibilities. In short – with this being my last hypothesis – it can be thus summed up that the popularity and practical realization of this concept is not likely on the short run.

In summary, I highlight the differences between the first part (1st and 2nd chapters) and the second part (3rd and 4th chapters) of my paper, both in terms of processed literature and in terms of applied research methodology. But this is exactly the point, since the aim of the paper is to answer the problems presented in the security field with market based approach.

² The exact description of this market-based control is defined in chapter 3.2.6 of the paper.

4. Summary of scientific results

According to one of the final conclusions of the thesis, by the beginning of the 21st century, voices that call migration as a phenomenon inducing socioeconomic problems and threatening state and human security alike, thus requiring active intervention, are ever louder. In common people the feeling gets stronger that migration is an unwanted burden from which states need to be protected. This is further fueled by the increasing number of security based articles appearing in journals and papers dealing with migratory issues since 11th September 2001. There are now people who mix the expressions ‘immigrants’ with ‘illegal immigrants’. Public opinion is much more interested in threats and problems brought upon by the mobility of people rather than the positive effects of it. Therefore it is more and more often that the economic significance of migration dampens in the view of politicians and researchers. It is now regularly forgotten that mobility of people is a natural phenomenon that is beneficial not only for migrants themselves but also for the community that hosts them.

This paper has four main chapters, each dealing with a different major topic based on the theoretic framework of the 4th page and the questions related. All four topics are new to Hungarian literature so far. Each chapter gives answers proven by theoretically based logic to the hypothesis described in the previous section.

4.1 Important theories connected to international migration

In the first chapter I describe shortly the most important theories of migration that were introduced by researchers or groups/schools of researchers in the past few centuries. Since this summarizing and categorizing work is not the most important aim of the paper, the listing and description is far from complete, taking into account the enormous variety and size of migration literature.

This summary categorizes migration theories by several characteristics. First, it takes into account which theory belongs to what scientific field, even if a theory uses the methodologies of several fields simultaneously. Second, it also looks at what level migration theory schools put their focus of study. By this view it differentiates between micro level theoretic systems that examine the migrant’s decision of movement on the individual level; macro level theories, which puts social, economic, and political

structures characterizing countries of origin and destination; and so called mezo level theories that focus on the role of relationships connecting micro and macro levels. Third, the chapter categorizes theories by the relation they show to development theory – and in that sense decides whether a theory considers migration as positive or negative for social and economic development (calling theories optimistic or pessimistic, respectively).

By these lines I briefly introduce and categorize the following theories: the classical (Ravenstein) and neoclassical theories of migration; the theory of segmented labor markets; theory of world systems; theory of human capital; economic approach of family migration and migration networks; theory of migratory institutions; theory of cumulative causalities; theories dealing with remittances and its effect on migration; the new economics of migration; migration as a consumption activity; natural selection of immigration; migration systems and migration channels; and finally transnationalism and the approach of trans-migration.

4.2 The relation between international migration and security studies

This chapter is meant to introduce the so called securitization process of migration. It answers the central question: what is the causal background behind security getting more and more significance in migration discourse.

One of the answers is a very peculiar one, noting that the statement “international migration threatens security” is not said neither by politicians nor by commentators. Thus, this chapter handles this statement as a hypothesis, and, although staying by the field of social and economic philosophy, it proves it with the reconceptualization of ‘security’. According to this definition, security is when an individual is in a state when he/she does not sense that his/her satisfaction of his living standards is decreasing or will decrease by an external effect or circumstance. Since in developed countries the satisfaction of the individual is closely related to welfare, a very important segment of the complex term of security is made up of economic security, or in other words, welfare of the individual. From this redefinition of security, it can be extrapolated that international migration is de facto a threat to security of a welfare state citizen. And if we consider security as a central, essential factor, we can easily conclude that the control of migratory flows is necessary to avoid the threat it means. Afterwards, the chapter describes the process by which international migration is securitized and by which the security measures are institutionalized. At the same time it highlights the

concept that following the securitization process, effective control of migration is possible only by policy driven administrative measures and means. The paper certifies this by following a short analysis of the migration policy of the European Union as an example. But this also raises the question if, on a theoretic ground, this approach and practice of using exclusively administrative means for migration control is the only possible way for control?

4.3 Alternative, market based approach to migration control

After introducing many theories of migration in the first chapter, I consider it an uncontested fact that the major part of present day migration is the consequence of economic reasons. In the case of international migration, according to the principles and laws of the operation mechanisms of the presently ruling global economic system, in the market of labor (as one primary factor of production), the law of rivalry pushes with an immense force trying to balance the inequalities of the market by the flow labor.³ Thus, the bulk of international migration is generated by economic, market mechanisms. In my paper I follow the standpoint that if according to security reasons this flow of primary factor of production must be restricted, it would be more efficient and effective to undertake this control by the market instead of administrative means. In short, my argument is that the effective and efficient manipulation of an economy based process can be successfully and naturally realized by similarly economic methods.

Following the logic thread of the above, I conclude that the hypothesis of the second chapter is verified, so the ‘changing trends of international migration, effective and efficient migration management needs other, alternative principles and methods’. For this to happen, first step is a change in migration discourse, breaking out of the trap of policy and bureaucracy driven approach. Even if it maintains the need for the control of migration, the change in the control and selection system of migration is suggested to be turned from policy and administrative basis to a market based method. This approach should integrate the viewpoint that mass international migration is a phenomenon with economic roots. Therefore, the effective way of manipulating it must be also based on economic and market solutions.

In the third chapter I introduce such an applicability of market methods, by which migration control can be realized by principles and modes very different from

³ The larger this inequality on the labor market, the stronger this so called ‘migratory pressure’ is.

those applied presently by governments. The essence of this alternative system is that immigrants would not be selected and filtered by government- or bureaucracy-created principles, but this feat would be accomplished by market mechanisms instead. Namely, immigrants would be obliged to pay a fee (calculated by and index system) upon entry to the country. This would start to generate such a filtering network that would operate by the rules of the market. The economic theory behind this alternative system is that living in the territory of a state is defined as belonging to the community of state (in terms of accessing the common goods and services of the community) therefore it should be considered as a market commodity. Although this commodity is accessible by everybody living in the state, but it has a price, which changes according to the rules of demand and supply. Since supply is provided by the hosting state, it can – with certain limits – influence the price of the sold commodity, namely, immigration (as access to the community). With this influence on the price, the state can thus manipulate the quantity of the sold immigration right, affecting how many people enter. Of course, the design of such a system mechanism requires serious planning and rises several questions of which this paper tries to answer some.

In my point of view, the entire operation of the system is very similar to environment protection fees and quotas described in environmental economics. The aim of the system, as it is in this last case to cast an environmental fee for companies in order to decrease their willingness to produce in an unwanted way, in our case it is to decrease the demand for immigration. By this feat the overly damaging effect of mass immigration can be drawn to limits, as the environmental damage caused by destructive companies. The important side of this system compared with the present one is that the market would select immigrants instead of the state, which would have several beneficial side-effects both for the state, the country, and the native population (but not for the human smuggling industry) as detailed in the paper.

New approaches along this concept of migration control started to appear in the beginning of the 21st century. Especially in the articles of German and Austrian researchers and economist have gone deeper on the issue and started to design models to develop the theory.

4.4 The Development Visa System, as a possible mode of realization of the market based migration control concept

In the fourth chapter I introduce and analyze an alternative model, arguing that such a system would allow more effective and efficient solutions for the related problems than presently operating migration control systems. This model originally comes from the pen of Michael Jandl, which I have elaborated and suggested modifications in a few points of my paper.⁴

Development Visa would be a type of visa with a price calculated as described in the previous chapter. The aim of drawing this visa system is elaborate in details the concept of the previous chapter, and provide some hints on how it could be put to practice. Thereby it serves to prove that the application of such a system is not totally unrealistic. The description of such a model is necessary, because without it the content of the previous chapter cannot create the image of an operating system that answers to problems experienced daily in presently operating migration control systems. At the same time, drawing up a model of precise detail would take up a different thesis just by itself, so this could not have been my goal.

Since both the theory on market based migration control systems and the Development Visa scheme can be considered radical to a certain extent, it draws a lot of critique from experts and commentators, I emphasize that this model is quoted to demonstrate theoretical conclusions, rather than to prove any of them. The theory has been presented in a way that it is theoretically proven in its own definitive context. But both the theory and this model exist only on paper, so their capability to function cannot be proven until any government decides to give it a try.

The concept and the model also provide an excellent occasion to discuss theoretic questions on the root causes of migration theories, and gives an opportunity to re-examine their validity and applicability.

My ending conclusion is though, that the manifestation of the described alternative market based migration control systems in practice is presently not realistic due to several reasons detailed in the paper. It needs a long time and an intensive change in the global discursive context until public and political mentality will be adoptive to the benefits of such an alternative logic.

⁴ This model of Jandl first appeared in a policy brief, it was later put to a more detailed yet short publication:

Jandl, Michael: The Development-Visa Scheme: a proposal for a market-based migration control policy, Global Migration Perspectives, No. 36., June 2005 (www.gcim.org)

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