

Bridging Worlds? Migration, Islam and Western Civilization through the Lens of Hungary and the European Union

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Abstract:

The interaction between migration, Islam, and Western civilization has become one of the most debated issues of the twenty-first century, raising profound political, cultural, and social questions. This study seeks to investigate these dynamics specifically through the lens of Hungary and the European Union, two actors whose perspectives and responses to these processes diverge in important ways. The scientific aim of this inquiry is to critically analyze how migration and the presence of Islam are perceived, framed, and managed within the broader discourse on Western civilization, while also exploring whether the encounter of these worlds should be understood primarily as conflict, adaptation, or dialogue.

The central findings point toward a complex and ambivalent reality. On the one hand, the relationship between Islam and Western civilization is often described in terms of incompatibility or cultural tension, a framing reinforced by security concerns, political rhetoric, and identity debates across Europe. On the other hand, migration also generates opportunities for dialogue, mutual adaptation, and pluralism, highlighting that the encounter between civilizations is not predetermined but shaped by political choices, institutional frameworks, and societal attitudes. Within this broader European context, Hungary's position illustrates both the possibilities and the limitations of national narratives: it frequently departs from dominant EU approaches by emphasizing cultural protection and security, while the European Union as an institution tends to promote integration and normative pluralism. This divergence reveals not only the heterogeneity within Europe itself, but also the contested nature of the "Western" identity when confronted with Islam.

Methodologically, the research is based on a qualitative analysis of political discourse, policy documents, and secondary literature. By combining discourse analysis with comparative political and cultural perspectives, the study examines how narratives around migration and Islam are constructed, negotiated, and contested at both the Hungarian and EU levels. This approach enables a multidimensional view that goes beyond simplistic binaries of "clash" or "dialogue," instead situating the encounter within broader historical, cultural, and geopolitical frameworks.