

Irregularized Migration

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The term "irregular migration" entered wide use at the turn of the 21st century, as part of the expansion of the neoliberal discourse prone to euphemisms (cf. Ryznar 2017: 312), fostered by numerous criticisms of the terms illegal migration and especially illegal migrant (cf. [UNHCR](#)). In Serbia, for example, the term has not come into wide usage, while in others, such as Croatia, where it is used in two linguistic forms ("irregular" [iregularne] and "nonregular" [neregularne] migration), it became more accepted and used more frequently, including in [reports](#) of the Ombudswoman, civil society organizations [policy documents](#) and academic papers (e.g. Petrović and Pozniak 2014). Under the influence of spreading anti-migrant discourses, the inertia of the media or as part of communication strategies that normalize exclusions, expulsions (**pushbacks**), and, in general, the expansion of border violence, after the closure of the **Balkan corridor**, the term started to recede more and more in the Croatian context, being replaced by terms such as illegal migrants and illegal or unlawful migration.

Although "irregular migration" entered the field as a corrective, even euphemistic term, this expression is also burdened with negative connotations that are reflected even at the level of its definitions. Irregular migration is usually defined negatively, as "migration that take place without appropriate (administrative) approvals, i.e., migration carried out by people who do not have valid approvals to enter or reside in a territory" (Stojić Mitrović 2016: 45). Irregular migration is also defined as external in relation to the established order, as, stated in the glossary of the [European Commission](#), migration that take place "outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries".

The notion of irregular migration in the literature stems from the idea of irregularity as "a condition that is *produced* through various processes of (ir)regularization" (Squire 2011: 5), i.e., as a product of a series of practices, agreements, disputes and conflicts. The use a passive past participle (*irregularized*) as an adjective instead of a simple adjective form (*irregular*) emphasizes the departure from the normative and established use of the term and affirms the constructivist perspective according to which irregular migration is not a socially and culturally neutral phenomenon bounded by stable and clear boundaries, and reducible to the question of the legal status of a person's residence or the legality of their crossing the border. Accordingly, irregularized migration studies analytically focuses on the ways in which certain mobilities are constructed and lived as irregular. The concept of illegalized migration is also used in the literature (eg Bauder 2013; De Genova 2002) in a similar sense.

The more and more prevalent illegalization of migration is considered (e.g. Squire 2011) a part of the **securitization** and criminalization of migration, primarily the entry, but also residence and work, and the associated multiplication of borders that divide cross-border mobilities into categories of desirable and undesirable, productive and threatening. As pointed out by Yolande Jansen, Robin Celikates and Joost de Bloois, in the introduction to the book *The Irregularization of Migration in Contemporary Europe*, "the proliferation of borders increasingly goes hand in hand with the normalization of the idea that migration is irregular — as are the lives of those who attempt to cross borders — and should be regulated and managed in the most stringent ways" (2015: ix). Jansen, Celikates and Bloois, building their arguments based on ideas from other authors, emphasize the connection between the irregularization of migration and economic liberalization and the opening of free flows of work, goods and money in the context of a globalized economy.

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