Migration Industry

Drago Župarić-Iljić

Migration industry is a term that can have multiple meanings related to migration phenomena and processes. It can include various aspects of the migration infrastructure and **migration regime**, both material and virtual, and various individual and collective actors, roles and structures (Nyberg Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen 2013). On the one hand, it refers to migrations that are seen as safe, orderly, voluntary and legal, and on the other hand, those that are perceived as involuntary and irregular/**irregularized** and illegal. The term comes from research on international migration in the period from the 1970s until today, when it was used for primarily designating the facilitation of migration by various actors that connect countries of origin with destinations. In later conceptualizations, the meaning of the term was extended to social dynamics and infrastructural elements that connect countries of origin and destinations through formal, legal and informal, unlawful practices of all actors participating in the act of migration, whether they initiate it, facilitate it or try to control it (Hernández-León 2005).

Ninna Nyberg Sørensen and Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen claim that “immigration policies, labor market structures, visa requirements, border controls, etc., almost always remain an essential backdrop for understanding how [...] migration industry actors emerge and function” (2013: 11). These actors include any person who provides various services to facilitate the mobility of people across international borders, and are primarily motivated by financial gain. This includes employers, lenders, renters, accommodation and transport service providers, travel agencies, smugglers and traffickers. But it also indirectly involves creators and implementers of public policies such as social workers, cultural mediators, educators and others, journalists and other media workers, researchers, legal professionals, lawyers and judges, other officials from the executive government, etc.

The parallel with the entrepreneurial and more broadly understood economic sphere, including manufacturing or today’s high-tech machine production, is not accidental, because the migration industry also includes business subjects such as IT and high-tech companies that develop systems used for border surveillance, produce biometric technology for control and monitoring, construct sophisticated digital services for recording and reporting in case of unauthorized movement and similar technologies. In this sense, we can also talk in terms of the industry or industries of border regimes, which are leaning towards a physical and often militarized, but also digitalized border control and managing mobility and the so-called migration crises in the same manner, and include actors who establish and serve places of immobilization within territories, such as **detention** centers, and persons who implement and facilitate deportations. While criticizing what he calls the “illegality industry”, Ruben Andersson (2016) notes that the European approach to migration management emphasizes the financial, political and social costs of achieving border security. Given the “illegalization” of migration, there are attempts to justify the management by rigid measures of migration and border regimes in the eyes of the domestic public by presenting migration as a national and international risk and threat, which requires the mentioned costs of their suppression.

Tanya Golash-Boza (2009: 296) writes about the “immigration industrial complex” which she defines as “public and private sector interests in the criminalization of undocumented migration, immigration law enforcement, and the promotion of ‘anti-illegal’ rhetoric”. The migration industry acts so that it either encourages or restricts, shapes, facilitates, supports or hinders migration, as well as the resources and services associated with it, but also in the context of pre-migration and post-migration phenomena and processes. In a programmatic sense, the migration industry can include migration management, border and migration control (a purpose served by **Frontex**, for example), and the **rescue** industry and politics of **humanitarianism** industry (Nyberg Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen 2013: 6). Therefore, an entire spectrum of the migration industry belongs to the **humanitarian industry**, which includes, for example, people who create and implement humanitarian assistance measures in the **relocation** industry. Deanna Dadusc and Pierpaolo Mudu (2020) use the term “humanitarian industrial complex” to refer to international and national institutions and NGOs that, through activities in the public and private sectors, participate in many aspects of selecting and regulating the movement of migrants, as well as in promoting charitable and humanitarian rhetoric established on the principles of urgency and assistance. In this manner, the humanitarian industry actually abets the security industry in disciplining, controlling and subordinating migrants and depoliticizing their position, but also in the **criminalization of solidarity** and cooperation aimed at the emancipation of migrants and their own agency.

This is precisely why one of the criticisms of this concept or approach argues that it often omits the perspective of the migrants themselves in the entire migration industry, focusing on various social, political, economic and other

structures that manage and control various forms of (im)mobility (Schapendonk 2018). Migrant social networks are an indispensable part of the migration industry due to transnational family ties and relationships, the potential role of social networks of migrant groups in the process of smuggling, or due to sending remittances, levels of political organization, etc.

Research on migration in the context of Southeast Europe, especially the **Balkan corridor**, was, in relation to the migration industry, focused on the technocratic practices of national and international actors, the management of mobility within the corridor and the wider border regime, as well as the delicate balancing act between security and humanitarian policies (cf. Beznec et al. 2016; Kogovšek Šalamon and Bajt 2016), and on examples of humanitarian, solidarity and resistance practices in certain reception-transit sections of the corridor (cf. Hameršak and Pleše 2017; Škokić and Jambrešić Kirin 2017). One of the studies (Stojić Mitrović et al. 2020) focuses on examples of management and irregularization of migration, the operation of the border regime, and the establishment of new infrastructural means of control in the post-corridor period. Romana Pozniak (2020), using Mark Duffield's term "aid industry", analyzes the humanitarian aid industry within the refugee camps in Croatia.

The role of academic structures, business consulting entities such as think-thanks, experts and analysts is often problematized, with these actors also participating in the migration industry by creating and circulating knowledge and recommendations on various aspects of migration, which can have a normative, prescriptive dimension. However, their starting points, especially those from the perspective of anthropology such as critical studies of borders and critical studies of humanitarianism, try to reflect their own research experiences, moral responsibility and positions of power in relation to the topic, research participants, the reach of academic knowledge and the potential for social change.

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