

Weaponized Landscape

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The term “weaponized landscape” and its variants are used in, apart from research approaches to military and war topics, the context of migration research to refer to the natural landscape being used as a weapon in the fight against **illegal migration** (cf., e.g., De León 2015). This natural landscape is used as a means of deterring migrants by being “armed”, for example with surveillance cameras or police forces with weapons, or is used in its “natural” form as an instrument against migrants, as a weapon, or a (potentially) dangerous environment for people on the move. The chains of responsibility held by individuals, politicians and societies for the suffering of refugees and other migrants in such an environment, i.e. in nature, are hidden, as Estela Schindel (2022) summarizes, behind the widely accepted “de-historicized and de-politicized construction of ‘nature’” which connects the deaths and suffering with supposedly neutral natural elements such as terrain configuration, weather conditions, plant cover, wild animals, etc. There is no reflection on the reasons why migrants are in nature in the first place, nor on the fact that people on the move are consciously and deliberately pushed into these environments with policies of exclusion, control and obstruction of other possible paths. This “directing” of **irregularized migrants** towards potentially dangerous natural landscapes is important for the weaponized landscape concept. In Croatia and neighboring countries on the **Balkan route**, prominent weaponized landscapes include **forests** (Hameršak and Pleše 2021), **rivers** and mountains, while elsewhere they consist of deserts (De León 2015), other mountains (Del Biaggio et al. 2020), seas (e.g. Albahari 2015) or archipelagos (e.g. Mountz 2017).

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Literature

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