



## **A review of “Irregular Migration, Informal Labour and Community: A Challenge for Europe”**

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### **Abstract:**

This large volume is a collection of articles and studies on migration, especially in connection with informal employment. This book presents the outcome of a conference held in Istanbul in 2005 and consists mainly of theoretical articles and case studies of high quality, which could be characterized as a contribution to present social theory of international migration.

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While the Marxian theory of the old school began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as one of the ideological reactions to migration of villagers to the cities, today’s Marxists, usually with the post- prefix, are concerned with the international division of labour. This happened in connection with a massive increase of international migration in the time of decolonization, especially during the Cold War. Most of the authors in the volume reflect the Marxian theory in one way or another. The common motto of this book could be “for the present social theory of international migration”.

The research group behind this conference was established upon the Swedish-Turkish initiative IMILCO (“International Migration, Informal Labour and Community in Europe”) and two of the book’s four editors are representatives of Swedish (Eric Berggren) and Turkish (Gülay Toksöz) academia. The introduction of the book was written by Professor Carl-Ulrik Schierup; a historian, economist and a theoretician of migration from the Linköping University. The authors, like the editors, are of various international backgrounds.

The book is divided into five different parts, but it keeps a certain partial homogeneity. The first part (“Irregular Migration in the Changing Migratory System: Migration Management, Asylum and Policies of Development”) is a collection of articles that are more generally

connected to the system of international migration, and also migration politics and the informal dimension of globalisation and international division of labour. Two case studies are then presented from Bulgaria (Anna Krasteva) and Turkey (İsmet Emre Işık).

The next part (“Irregular Migration and the Informalisation of European Labour Markets Comparative Perspectives on Labour Market, production and Welfare Regimes”) is focused on the connection between migration and international division of labour. While this part contains the contributions by the book’s “celebrity”, Carl-Ulrik Schierup, and two of the editors (Branka Likić-Brborić, Gülay Toksöz), it can be reckoned as one of the peaks of the book. Among keywords relevant to this part are phrases such as: informal globalization, post-Fordist restructuring and “bloody subcontracting”. Case studies focus on Turkey (Gülay Toksöz) and Spain (Ubaldo Martinez Veiga).

The third section („Intimate Others: Irregular Migration, Informal Labour and Gender“) is focused on the gender dimension of migration. Besides general subjects, there are examples of foreign nannies, maids and prostitutes in Greece (Gabiella Lazaridis), the sex industry in the Baltic States (Beatriz Lindqvist) and representations of female migrants in the Dutch multicultural society (Deniz Ünsal).

The following section („Irregular Migration, Civil Society and Migrant Networks: Inclusion or Seclusion?“) is mainly dedicated to the question present in its title. Just one of those four articles is general, while the other three articles are devoted to more particular problems. There are case studies concerning “Little India” in Paris (Vasoodeven Vuddamalay), employment strategies of Turkish migrants in London (Aykan Erdemir and Ellie Vasta) and finally Swedish cultural and ethnic civic organizations (Aleksandra Ålund and Isak Reichel).

The last section (“Irregular Migration, Populism, Democracy and Citizenship: 'Fortress' versus 'Cosmopolitanism““) focuses in detail on the reactions of the majority of society to migration issues. Beside xenophobia in the commonly mentioned example of Denmark (Erik Berggren) and in the case of Turkey (Erhan Doğan), other topics are presented here such as the Dutch politics of deterring of migrants (Joanne van der Leun), identifying migration with terrorism in Britain (Anastassia Tsoukala), or civil activism and campaigns against deportations of illegal migrants in a number of European countries (Franck Düvell). One article (by Nikos Trimikliniotis) gives the section a more general scope speaking about populism, democracy and social citizenship.

The problem of many similar comprehensive volumes is that there is usually an imbalance in content and quality of the articles. In this case, however, the editors succeeded in ensuring a high quality of all of the articles. As for various research approaches and disciplines

represented, we can see their synergy rather than divergence. Although this can be caused by the fact that migration is a subject of a number of social sciences, such symbiosis of sciences is really rare in an extensive volume like this.

Next to the section “Irregular Migration and the Informalisation of European Labour Markets: Comparative Perspectives on Labour Market, production and Welfare Regimes”, which has been already mentioned as the core of the book. There is another section which I consider central: the well elaborated topic of xenophobia as one of the reactions to migration trends in contemporary Europe. The article of Erik Berggren („Danish Xenophobia – Power Logic in Motion“) is one of the theoretical and analytical jewels on this topic. Berggren presents here an excellent theoretical performance and asks a provocative question about the origin of xenophobia while going back to the Frankfurt School and its reception of enlightenment. Berggren, as well as the representatives of the critical theory, sees enlightenment as the origin of the pressure on uniformization of society- the birth of fascism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and of the xenophobia in contemporary society. This scheme presented in the article is, however, further complicated by the references to the populist basis of today’s Danish xenophobia. By the means of a series of “miniature state revolutions” in the first years of the new millennium, xenophobia made its way to official state politics. Berggren’s vision is partly optimistic when he points to a wide range of civil protest of the Danish public against xenophobic state politics.

It is not yet sure whether pro- or anti- migration tendencies will win in Denmark or in Europe. The only sure thing is that migration and informal employment have become an important part of the political agenda in more and more countries of Europe, and that the connection of discourses based on ethnicity and social status will be more relevant in the future.

Berggren, E., Likić-Brbrić, B., Toksöz, G., Trimikliniotis, N. eds. (2007). *Irregular Migration, Informal Labour and Community: A Challenge for Europe*. Maastricht: Shaker Publishing.