

# Invisible Journeys: The Hidden Struggles of Irregular Migrants

Phoebe Owor - Department of Anthropology, Tasneem Begum Mustapha - Department of Government, Derin Bohçaci - Department of Language Center, and Ladajah Wilson - Department of Law



What are the policy, professional, and legal structures shaping the experiences of irregular migrants navigating support systems in Italy, Greece, Turkiye and the United Kingdom from the perspective of NGO workers?"

This study explores how policy, professional, and legal structures affect irregular migrants in Italy, Greece, Turkiye, and the UK, based on NGO workers' perspectives.

Key findings include:

- **Attitudes towards irregular migrants:** Political rhetoric often criminalizes migrants, influencing public perception and policy.
- **Professional structures:** Limited access to interpretation services increases vulnerability for non-English speakers.
- **Legal structures:** Inadequate national laws contribute to migrants' marginalization.

The research, based on qualitative interviews with NGO workers, reveals gaps in support systems and recommends policy reforms prioritizing human rights, integration, improved interpretation services, and addressing xenophobia in public discourse.

## Methodology

Countries

**4**

**8** Semi-structured interviews

A sample of NGO Workers, Legal Professionals and Academics

## Findings

Structure	Italy	Greece	Turkiye	UK
<b>Attitudes towards migrants</b>	Political rhetoric criminalizes irregular migrants	Xenophobic attitudes and nationalistic sentiments	Xenophobic attitudes in media, anti-integrationist policies	Stringent migration proposals, politically symbolic
<b>Professional</b>	Interpretation services crucial but access limited	Interpretation services crucial but access limited	Lack of adequate Turkish language education for irregular migrants	Language barriers in EU Settlement Scheme application process
<b>Legal</b>	National laws fail to adequately protect irregular migrants	Detention practices raise human rights concerns	Bifurcated system of protection, with few legal avenues for integration and settlement	Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs) for detained migrants are inhumane

### Implications of findings:

- Criminalization in political discourse contributes to migrant vulnerability and social exclusion.
- Inadequate interpretation services hinder migrants' ability to navigate legal systems and access support.
- Gaps in legal protections across studied countries indicate a need for policy reform to address human rights concerns.

### Conclusion:

- Research reveals significant gaps in support systems for irregular migrants across the four countries.
- Negative political rhetoric, lack of quality interpretation services, and inadequate legal protections are key challenges.
- Findings highlight the need for policy reforms prioritizing human rights and integration.