



Proposed MA topic

Beyond the emergency: asylum and migrant rights

When considering migration control in Europe today, initial thoughts automatically go to the management of 'emergencies', for example in the domain of humanitarian intervention, refuge and hosting regimes. Questions arise about militarized border control, the assistance to incoming refugees, their (mis)treatment and (arbitrary) detention, the implementation and contestation of European legislation as well as asylum rights across different (national and regional) scales.

These questions are all very relevant. Less attention, however, has gone to the legal and material conditions migrants face once they have *crossed* European national borders, either legally or illegally. How, for example, does the condition of illegality impact upon migrants' access to housing, work, and social services, like for example health care? Are these conditions fundamentally different from officially recognized asylum seekers (migrants seeking explicit political protection) hosted across a wide variety of institutions situated deep *inside* European country's national borders? What is the effect of people's ambivalent legal status (forced to await recognition or refusal while lacking official citizenship rights) on their fundamental human rights? And how does this ambivalence affect their daily subsistence, their ways to build a sustainable future?

This MA topic concerns a broad range of questions around the issue of migrant's liminality – the tension between their undetermined legal status and the practical exercise of their (human) rights in two specific domains: the right to housing and the right to work. The empirical focus will be on asylum seekers and refugees in (North) Italy and Switzerland, with a possibility for fieldwork in both countries under the guidance of one of the supervisors. The method is ethnographic, precluded by a thorough literature review.

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