



Proposed Master Thesis, 22.12.2014

Legal landscapes of containment of asylum seekers in Switzerland

Asylum seekers need to reach sovereign territories to claim asylum, which is increasingly complicated by states' attempts to prevent their arrival. Those reaching sovereign territories and claiming asylum are then introduced into a sophisticated regime of housing with its specific (micro-)geographies of containment. Their housing routes range from reception centers, federal temporary housing facilities to cantonal transit centers, municipal housing and potentially emergency housing – with differentiated spatial and temporal forms of containment and control. Their legal (non-)status – as asylum seekers in the procedure, Dublin cases, temporarily admitted persons, recognized refugees or rejected asylum seekers – crucially impacts their freedom of movement and residence on the way. Hence, asylum seekers enter a complex and layered regime of containment and im/mobilization once they arrive in Switzerland. This regime of interlocking jurisdictions – *legal landscapes* – has not attracted much scholarly attention yet.

This Master Thesis will try to map these legal landscapes in the case of Switzerland through a study of law and policy. It will revolve around the following questions: How did the current regime of containment and the practices related to this emerge and evolve over the last decade(s)? What are the rationalities that substantiate this regime? How does it operate? Empirically, these questions could be approached through a discourse analysis of law and policy and expert interviews across a range of institutions involved in the regime (Federal Office for Migration, cantonal social service office(s) and migration office(s), service providers, police, etc.). The aim of this Master Thesis is to provide novel insights into a crucial and contested issue of our times – the increasing containment of certain groups of people – and to contribute to the burgeoning field of legal geographies.

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