The «Zürcher Humangeographische Kolloquium» is jointly organised by the four units of Human Geography, Political Geography, Economic Geography and Space & Organization at the Department of Geography, Zurich University. All interested are cordially invited.

Tuesday 25 November 2014, 16:15 – 18:00
University of Zurich-Irchel, Winterthurerstrasse 190, Y 15 G 60

Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen
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Rise of the Private Border Guard – what implications for migrants, governance and human rights?

Migration control is traditionally seen as an inalienable function of the state; a key sovereign prerogative flowing from control over territory. Yet, just as migration control has gradually lost much of its connection to physical borders, the last decades have also seen the growth of a distinct “migration control industry” with private companies taking over erstwhile functions to screen, control, detain and deport migrants. The privatization of migration management represents a fundamental re-organization of state sovereignty that may have a lasting impact not only on the performance of control, but also on the development of migration policies in outsourcing states. At the same time it raises a number of questions in regard to the human rights of migrants and the possibility for ensuring democratic accountability in this field.

Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen is Research Director at the Danish Institute for Human Rights, executive chairman of the Association of Human Rights Institutes and a member of the Danish Refugee Appeals Board. His research focuses on human rights and globalization, international refugee law, immigration policy and sovereignty, in particular issues relating to transnational human rights obligations, access to asylum, migration management, and the relationship between international law, EU and Danish migration policy. In addition he works on more theoretical issues related to sovereignty and the relationship between international human rights law and politics. He is the author of numerous articles and a number of books, including Sovereignty Games (Palgrave 2008), Access to Asylum: International refugee law and the globalisation of migration control (Cambridge University Press 2011), Protecting the Rights of Others (DJØF 2013) and The Migration Industry and the Commercialisation of International Migration (Routledge 2013).