


Practices, Experiences and Perceptions of Immigration Detention

An ethnography of detention facilities in Switzerland

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Every year in Switzerland more than 5000 people are detained before being deported either to their country of origin or to another country which is considered responsible for them. Differently from the practice of many other countries, asylum seekers and irregular migrants are held in regular prisons together with (although usually separated from) convicted persons and pretrial detainees. This thesis aims at understanding how immigration detention is related to processes of criminalization of mobility and of migrants’ exclusion.

<div><h3>Research Questions</h3><p>General Questions of IP13:</p><ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do bordering and detention practices work in different sites of exclusion?• How are these practices perceived, experienced and contested by different actors involved?<p>Specific Questions:</p><ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How is life in detention organised and to what extent is it conditioned by carceral spaces and practices?2. How is detention perceived and experienced by detainees?3. How do prison employees perceive their role and make sense of their job?4. What forms does resistance take in detention?</div>	<div><h3>Methods</h3><p>By adopting an ethnographic and multi-perspective approach, the sub-project attempts to reflect the multiplicity of practices, rationales and experiences of various actors of immigration detention facilities.</p><p>Qualitative data are collected in three detention facilities through:</p><ul style="list-style-type: none">• participant observation• interviews with detainees, prison staff, and other relevant actors• group activities with detainees• document analysis<p>Qualitative data are thematically coded and analysed with the help of MAXQDA.</p><p>Quantitative data have been requested at the federal level and will be descriptively analysed.</p></div>	<div><p>Picture Corinne Glanzmann / Neue Luzerner Zeitung</p><h3>First results</h3><ul style="list-style-type: none">- Institutional embeddedness of immigration detention in the penal system- Multiple roles and different self-perceptions of prison staff (control vs. care)- Routinized work of prison officers and keeping of distance from individual detainees- Use of categories of “illegality” to make sense of detention both by prison staff and detainees- Experience of being detained as highly punitive (vs. stated aim)- Carceral space and institution often perceived as disconnected from the deportation procedure (only a “waiting space”)- Broad use of detention for Dublin transfers- Gendered practice taking place in gendered spaces</div>
<div><h3>Main references</h3><p>Aas, Katja Franko and Mary Bosworth, eds. (2013). <i>The borders of punishment: migration, citizenship and social exclusion</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press.</p><p>Bosworth, Mary (2014). <i>Inside immigration detention</i>. Oxford: Oxford Univesity Press.</p><p>Moran, Dominique, Nick Gill and Deirdre Conlon (2013). <i>Carceral spaces: mobility and agency in imprisonment and migrant detention</i>. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited.</p><p>Mountz, Alison et al. (2013). "Conceptualizing detention: mobility, containment, bordering, and exclusion." <i>Progress in Human Geography</i>, 37(4): 522-541.</p></div>		