

# Lost in Transit?

## Fragmented Journeys of Young Migrants with no Chance of Admission in Europe

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This project is about young migrants without chance of being granted legal residence status in Switzerland and other European countries. Previous observations suggest that migrants, whose country of origin leaves them with low chances of receiving any type of residence permit, exhibit a highly complex migration pattern that is characterised by the following aspects. Firstly, these migrants are frequently in durable “transit” across Europe (and sometimes Africa), which is a multi-linear movement according to opportunities that open up along the journey. Secondly, they must exhibit a high degree of flexibility, as they have to respond to suddenly changing conditions, such as work opportunities, rejection of asylum claims, detention or deportation. Thirdly, they often switch between different legal statuses, such as asylum seeker, *sans papiers* or detainee. This must lead to a general state of uncertainty and psychological distress. The experience of these young adults should thus show a deep ambivalence between a sense of autonomy, on the one hand, and of profound hope- and powerlessness, on the other.

The project aims to explore the “fragmented journeys” of these migrants, by way of a multi-sited ethnographic approach and biographical interviews. What are their strategies to circumvent the restrictive Dublin II regulation and other national as well as international control policies? How does their specific migration pattern influence their life prospects, their integration in however flimsy and unstable social networks?

Given the fact that little is known about all this, the study will produce novel data on a highly pertinent new migration pattern, transit migration. Shedding light on migrants’ practices, expectations and needs is very important since these aspects often remain hidden to the public. The study will provide new insights into the impact of the European migration management on individual migrants. Hence, the collected on-the-ground knowledge will also be highly relevant in terms of policy making. Last but not least, the analysis will situate transit migration within the transnationalism paradigm in migration studies, thus hoping to also add theoretical value.